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West wing

TO THE EDITORS:

Elizabeth Rubin's coverage of the London conference of the Iraqi opposition was bizarre ("Fast Friends," December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003). Her report gave the misleading impression that the opposition only exists in exile, when, in fact, a large swath of northern Iraq is under Kurdish control and protected by U.S. and British warplanes. Indeed, the conference decided that the next opposition meeting would take place in this safe haven in mid-January 2003.

Odder still was the way in which Rubin completely overlooked the role of the Kurds in Iraqi politics. As Kanan Makiya has noted, the Kurds introduced the notion of federalism to the debate in 1992 after they held elections in the safe haven. All the talk of remaking the Middle East in our democratic image is meaningless if we do not also tackle the issue of the Kurds, one of the most persecuted ethnic groups in the region and a group without any recognition.

ANDREW APOSTOLOU
Adjunct Fellow
Western Policy Center
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

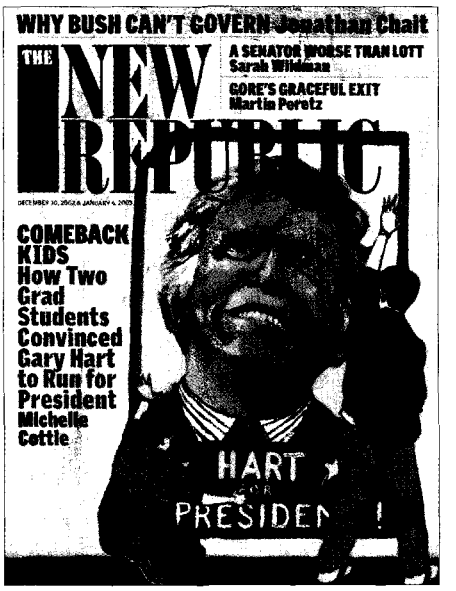
Rubin's article noted anti-West demonstrators in London "holding up banners that read, WE WANT KHALIFAH [an Islamic leader], NOT CAPITALISM." The term *khalifah* does not mean just an Islamic leader but refers to a concept of common leadership for all the Muslims in the world, as embodied in the caliphs of the early Islamic empires, who held both spiritual and temporal power in an absolutist government. The *khalifah* or caliph is believed to be the vice-regent of Allah on earth; it is his duty to establish the laws of Islamic *sharia* and to impose the unchallenged reign of Islam. Thus, it seems to me that the banner slogan WE WANT KHALIFAH does not mean the bearers just want an Islamic leader but rather that they want a reestablishment of the Islamic caliphate over all nations and peoples, with *sharia* as the paramount law. Taken in its most extreme manifestation, it could be a statement of war on Western civilization.

CARL PEARLSTON
Torrance, California

Crowded house

TO THE EDITORS:

I must take exception to THE NEW REPUBLIC's editorial "Island Getaway" (December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003). The article suggests that the United States offer China "financial incentives to provide legal status and safe haven for refugees." Then it goes on to say that the "United States should revamp immigration laws to welcome North Korean refugees as asylum-seekers at our embassies and borders." There could be millions seeking asylum, and it goes without saying that they are in dire straits. Should we really welcome these potential refugees?



Currently, the United States has a total debt of more than $6 trillion and is suffering from an extended downturn in the economy. Where does the money to pay the Chinese to offer asylum come from? Who pays to get them to the United States? Who pays to house and feed them, teach them English, and provide them with jobs once they arrive? We can't! What effect will these refugees have on our already crowded highways and schools? And isn't it possible that many of them would settle in areas that are already having serious problems with water shortages? How can anyone believe that the United States has "compelling" reasons to encourage and "welcome" the North Koreans to immigrate to the United States?

If this is our way of solving problems

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to Correspondence, TNR, 1331 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 (letters may also be sent electronically to tnr@aol.com). All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

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with our current enemies, why stop here? There are a lot of people living under regimes we consider to be "evil" who would jump at the chance to come to the United States given the opportunity. If we want to commit financial and ecological suicide, then the suggestions made in TNR's editorial are a great place to start.

CHARLES C. SCOTT
Placitas, New Mexico

Arm's length

TO THE EDITORS:

Peter Beinart's TRB reviewed Trent Lott's career but missed the most obvious points ("Clueless," December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003). Harry Truman's victory in 1948 meant that the U.S. military was integrated. Lott enthusiastically supported war in Vietnam but never served in that war. If he successfully kept African Americans out of his fraternity, why would anyone assume that he then would serve with them in the military as equals? If he wouldn't drink out of the same water fountain as African Americans, why would anyone assume that he would eat, sleep, and fight with them? Why would anyone assume that Lott would ever place himself in a military where he would be required to take orders from an African American? Men who did not serve in Vietnam were called slackers and reviled—except in the South. There, white men who supported the war but would not serve with African Americans were called patriotic, became Republicans, and were elected to Congress.

JOANNE MARIE ROLL
Denver, Colorado

Painted over

TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Cohn chipped away paint to reveal an invitation to industry influence on a Health and Human Services science advisory committee charged with providing advice to prevent childhood lead poisoning ("Toxic," December 23, 2002). At a time when other agencies and institutions are working to reduce undue industry influence, Secretary Tommy Thompson instead has overruled the nominations proposed by top scientists in favor of panelists with ideological advice more to the administration's liking.

Medical journals have recently re-evaluated and greatly strengthened their conflict-of-interest policies. They understand that, if their publications become viewed simply as tools for corporate sponsors to disseminate their facts and views, the journals will lose their credibility. Likewise, the National Academy of Sciences and the Environmental Protection Agency have both made significant progress toward increasing the balance and independence of their scientific advisory panels. The administration plays with fire when it disregards the qualifications or independence of its advisers. Both its own credibility and the role for factual evidence in policy decision-making are put at risk.

STEVEN G. GURNEY
Health & the Environment Program
Natural Resources Defense Council
Washington, D.C.

See no evil

TO THE EDITORS:

More than one year after September 11, 2001, the United States cannot forget that we are fighting a war on terrorism. The threat is still very present—no matter our success (or failure) in Afghanistan in taking on the Taliban and Al Qaeda and no matter the time and effort that must be devoted to Iraq and North Korea.

Al Qaeda is said to be experiencing success in recruiting young Islamics in Europe. The Dutch secret service, for instance, in a recent report to its parliament, said the terrorist organization is signing up legal and illegal immigrants in the mosques and cafés of their country to wage a jihad against the West. "The recruitment of these youths shows a violent radical Islamic current is stealthily taking root in Dutch society," the report stated.

European police have been rounding up terrorists and expressing surprise at the breadth of the Islamic terrorist network, which includes but is not limited to Al Qaeda and has links not just in Europe but also in North America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

One Al Qaeda–linked website, *www.jehad.net*, released an audio statement in which Al Qaeda's Süleyman, Abu Ghaith, promised, "The Christian-Jewish alliance will not, God willing, be safe from attacks by the mujahedin [Muslim warriors]. ... The alliance's installations and facilities everywhere will be subject to attacks. ... The next phase will witness bigger and more lethal operations." Ghaith makes it clear that the United States is a target to be victimized by "focused and lightning operations" and that we "should not feel safe, whether on land, sea, or air."

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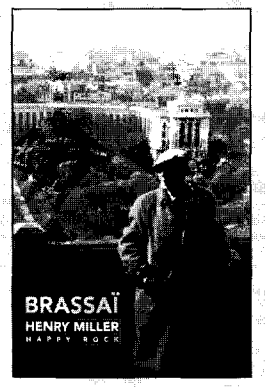
Brassaï

NEW FROM CHICAGO



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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

No Vote

SO FAR, MASSACHUSETTS Senator John Kerry has run a near-flawless presidential campaign. He has raised tons of money, locked up scores of seasoned advisers, and heartened timid Democrats by challenging President George W. Bush early and often on national security. Perhaps most importantly, he has started to remake his image. Once derided as calculating and aloof, Kerry is reinventing himself in the John McCain mold: as a straight-talking, tell-it-like-it-is, regular guy (see "The Makeover," by Michael Crowley, June 3, 2002).

But that effort is doomed to fail if Kerry keeps speaking so dishonestly about Iraq. In early October of last year, Kerry—already a de facto presidential candidate—faced a difficult choice. The president was pushing a Senate resolution giving himself virtually unrestricted authorization to wage war against Iraq. For Kerry, voting yes could prove dangerous in the Democratic primary—given the skepticism of Democratic voters toward a war with Saddam Hussein and their outright hostility toward a war conducted outside U.N. auspices. But voting no could prove dangerous in a general election against President Bush—who would use the vote, combined with Kerry's opposition to the first Gulf war, to paint the Massachusetts senator as Dukakis II, a weak-on-national-security liberal.

Facing a similar dilemma, Kerry's presidential rival Senator Joseph Lieberman voted to give Bush unfettered warmaking authority—and he is now paying the political price, especially in pacifist Iowa, where his chances of winning the state's caucuses are considered slim to none. Michigan's Senator Carl Levin and 17 other Democrats voted against giving Bush such sweeping powers. Instead, they supported a much narrower resolution, which tied Senate authorization to authorization from the United Nations.

Kerry voted for the broader resolution and against the narrower one—thus avoiding a problem in the general election and potentially creating one in the Democratic primary. And, in the nearly four months since, he has dealt with this potential problem by doing something remarkable: He has pretended the vote never happened. The resolution that the Senate passed—and Kerry supported—*encouraged* Bush to work with the United Nations, but it *required* him to do nothing more than alert Congress 48 hours after initiating hostilities and report to Congress every 60 days after that. West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, who opposed the measure, accurately described it as "handing the president unchecked authority." But Kerry said exactly the opposite. Two days after the vote, he visited Tucson, where he told a Democratic group, "Don't for an instant think the president has some great free hand." He went on to say, "If the president of the United States decides to go [to war] unilaterally, I think it would be one of the great catastrophes and mistakes of our time." It was a rather astonishing statement for a man who had just voted to grant the president the authority to do exactly that.

As the months have passed, the discrepancy between Kerry's description of his position on war with Iraq and his *actual* position, as manifested in his Senate vote, has only grown wider. Interviewed on "Meet the Press" on December 1, 2002, the man who voted to authorize unilateral war flatly stated, "I will not support the president to proceed unilaterally." In a foreign policy speech last week at Georgetown University, Kerry said, "The United States should never go to war because it wants to; the United States should go to war because we have to. And we don't have to until we have exhausted the remedies available, built legitimacy, and earned the consent of the American people, absent, of course, an imminent threat requiring urgent action." Given that Kerry clearly doesn't perceive an imminent threat, his call for the administration to exhaust "the remedies available" implies that the president shouldn't go to war without giving the U.N. inspections more of a chance.

But, of course, Kerry refused to condition his Senate vote on this kind of stipulation. And his call for giving inspections more time is a little disingenuous. "Show the world some appropriate patience in building a genuine coalition," Kerry thundered a few sentences later. "Mr. President, do not rush to war." But if the United States plans to fight a war, it *has* to rush—military experts say that in roughly two months the desert heat will make fighting impossible. The Bush administration can hold off for a few weeks, as it has signaled it might. But it is unlikely the weapons inspectors will find anything during that period to sway China, France, Germany, and Russia, thus creating the "genuine coalition" Kerry demands. More likely, Saddam will continue to cooperate just enough to avoid an outright confrontation with inspectors and obstruct just enough to make sure they find nothing important. And thus, in mid-February, the United States will face the same dilemma it faces today. Lieberman's answer to that dilemma is clear—he's prepared to go to war without U.N. sanction if necessary. Kerry's speeches, by contrast, suggest either that he hasn't decided whether he'd support such an attack or that he'd oppose it. What he doesn't say is that he has already voted on such an eventuality—and given it the green light.

In addition to international support, Kerry says the Bush administration should hold off on war until it gains greater domestic backing. At Georgetown, Kerry said the administration shouldn't attack until it has "built legitimacy and earned the consent of the American people." In recent weeks, this suggestion that the United States should not go to war while public opinion remains divided has become a familiar mantra among doves in Congress and in the media. This despite the fact that the first President Bush launched the highly successful Gulf war with less public support than his son has for this one and that Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson launched the disastrous Vietnam War with overwhelming public approval. But it is a particularly strange argument to hear from Kerry. The Massachusetts senator says President Bush needs the "consent of the American people." But, in a representative democracy, the people consent to policies not through Gallup but through their elected representatives. By voting for the president's war resolution, Kerry and a majority of his fellow members of Congress consented on the people's behalf. As it happens, the voters seem to have endorsed that position at the polls a month later. But if Kerry didn't believe Bush had won the public's consent for war, why on earth did he offer it?

It's not hard to understand why Kerry is pretending he never voted for unilateral war. Kerry's staff must look with pity on their naïve competitor Lieberman, whose unambiguous hawkishness has left him well to the right of many of the Democratic activists he needs to woo. But then at least those activists know what Lieberman believes about the most important issue facing the United States today. No one could say the same right now about Kerry.

PETER BEINART

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Time Out

WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH first publicly contemplated going to war with Iraq, some members of his administration said he need not obtain approval from Congress before doing so. But liberals insisted, rightly, that a war would lack constitutional or popular legitimacy if the president did not first receive explicit authorization from Congress. Bush complied. Later, some administration officials maintained that the United States could attack Iraq without giving Saddam Hussein one more chance to disarm peacefully through U.N. weapons inspections. But liberals argued, again rightly, that a final push for inspections was necessary to demonstrate that the United States desired war only as a last resort. And Bush complied again, persuading the U.N. Security Council to unanimously approve Resolution 1441, which offered Iraq a "final opportunity" to dismantle its nonconventional weapons. Bush may now dismiss the importance of these steps—"America's purpose is more than to follow a process," he said in his State of the Union address. But, in fact, so far the process of disarming Saddam has gone exactly as liberals rightly demanded.

The day before the president's address, the world received what should have been the final word on that process in the form of a report by chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix. Blix's verdict is positively devastating. Iraq, he writes, "appears not to have come to genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament which was demanded of it." Blix produces a litany of noncooperation: Iraq has failed to provide a full accounting of its weapons, as demanded; it has denied private interviews with its scientists; it has hidden crucial documents in private homes; and it has whipped up demonstrators to harass the inspectors with slanderous charges. (Some, hilariously, have described this report as "mixed." By this standard, Saddam's record of aggression is also mixed—we must consider the lengthy list of countries he has *not* invaded.) All these actions unquestionably fulfill the definition of a material breach agreed to under Resolution 1441.

So we now have reached the conditions under which, according to the standards once urged by most liberals, the United States must disarm Iraq by force. Yet the moderate, respectable opponents of the war—those who claimed they would favor military action if other steps failed—remain, for the most part, unmoved. Their predominant view now is that the only thing preventing a bloodless disarmament of Iraq is Bush's precipitous rush to war. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle summed up this sentiment when he asked this week, "How are our efforts to deal with this threat helped by short-circuiting an inspections process we demanded in the first place?"—as if the inspections were being stymied by Bush rather than by Saddam. It is now clear that Bush's critics didn't mean what they said all along: The mask of nuanced criticism has been pulled off the moderate antiwar position, exposing it for the abject pacifism it truly is.

The editorials of *The New York Times* are a good showcase of the intellectual incoherence of the liberal war critics. The *Times* is worth dwelling on not only because of its great influence but also because its opposition to war is carefully calibrated, closely matching the views of mainstream Democrats rather than those of angry street demonstrators. In fact, as the Iraq debate raged last fall, the paper's editorials professed to share the same goals as the administration. Last September the *Times* declared, "What really counts in this conflict ... is the destruction of Iraq's unconventional weapons and the dismantling of its program to develop nuclear arms." The *Times* stressed that Iraqis must cooperate actively, not merely fail to put up resistance, in order to avoid war. Iraq "must provide a full and accurate list of its unconventional weapons programs," the *Times* insisted on November 9. The following month it added that, to succeed, the inspectors "will need cooperation from knowledgeable Iraqis." Indeed, in its November editorial the *Times* explicitly sanctioned a unilateral war if Iraq failed to actively disarm: "If Baghdad violates *any of these provisions* [emphasis added], Washington should insist that the Security Council enforce its decision. Only if the council fails to approve the serious consequences it now invokes—generally understood to be military measures—should Washington consider acting alone."

The time to "judge Baghdad's overall cooperation and decide whether Iraq can be disarmed by peaceful means alone," the *Times* noted in late December, would be when Blix offered his report to the Security Council after the first 60 days of inspections. Now that moment has arrived—and with it undeniable proof that Baghdad has not offered the active cooperation deemed essential by the *Times*. You might think, then, that the paper would cite its previous

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criteria and endorse war. Not at all. Instead, the *Times* has already raised the bar. An editorial published the day after Blix's report pleaded that "the inspectors should be granted additional time" so they can "produce evidence that would mobilize an international consensus for additional steps." This echoed the logic of the previous Sunday's editorial, which declared, "There are some threats and some causes that require fighting even if America has to fight alone, but this isn't one of them." Disarmament, which the paper previously called "the unwavering goal" and "the lodestar of American and United Nations policy," has been reduced to a mere preference to be undertaken only if or when international opinion embraces it.

THE MOST CURIOUS feature of moderate antiwar sentiment, at the *Times* and elsewhere, is its refusal to engage with the central question: Would Iraq, if permitted to rebuild its nuclear, biological, and chemical arsenal, pose a threat to the United States? We believe the answer is yes. The example of North Korea demonstrates that when a hostile, irrational state obtains nuclear weapons, it immediately intimidates its neighbors, opens the possibility of passing such weapons to terrorists or other enemy regimes, and leaves the United States with few diplomatic tools to work with other than appeasement. Saddam's megalomaniacal aspirations and repeated pattern of aggression make him an even less attractive candidate to join the nuclear club than Kim Jong Il.

Antiwar liberals do not dispute this logic, they elide it. Liberals' most pervasive intellectual tic has been to argue against war on the grounds that somebody else is against it. Usually, that somebody else is our international allies, whom war critics have granted not merely consultation but full veto power over any military action. Earlier this week, the *Times* threw up another impediment: "The American public has not signed on," argued Sunday's editorial—an odd new standard, given that the paper has previously endorsed interventions both real (Kosovo) and hypothetical (Rwanda) that notched even lower levels of public approval. But if a nuclear-armed Iraq does pose a threat, then surely it's a threat worth diffusing, not only through inspectors but, if need be, unilaterally or without overwhelming public support.

Recently antiwar liberals have found yet another way to oppose the war without seeming to oppose the war: They say the United States should wait and "let the inspections work." Waiting would indeed be worthwhile if it boosted the odds of gaining world support for war or of Iraq's agreeing to disarm. But the truth is that, in either case, delaying is likely to have the opposite effect.

Nobody seriously disputes that Iraq is in material breach of the U.N. disarmament resolutions. The logic of waiting, after a dozen years of Iraqi refusal to disarm, is that somehow Saddam will become "more" in material breach. But Iraqi violations to date hardly constitute a technicality. Weapons inspections simply can't work against the will of the host country. Previous inspectors owed whatever breakthroughs they achieved to conditions—such as the unexpected defection of Saddam's brother-in-law—that are unlikely to be repeated. It would be ideal if Saddam could be persuaded to make a clean breast of it and disarm voluntarily. But letting his current recalcitrance continue indefinitely is probably the worst imaginable strategy to persuade him to do so.

Allowing Iraq's current noncooperation to go unpunished would codify it as the new baseline, and only a more flagrant defiance would then constitute a casus belli. The level of defiance most objectors seem to have in mind is the "smoking gun." But the chance of finding such a thing without Iraqi help is small. For one thing, Iraqi intelligence may well have infiltrated the weapons inspectors, as it did with previous U.N. teams. For another, it would take an astonishing blunder by Iraq to allow inspectors to uncover a weapons program of real note. Suppose the inspectors did get a tip on, say, a nuclear weapons plant and managed to descend upon it unannounced. No doubt the Iraqis would simply refuse the inspectors entry while they smuggled out or destroyed incriminating evidence. The most incriminating thing Iraq will ever be accused of is denying access to a sensitive site.

Indeed, the supposition that any level of Iraqi defiance would spur the Security Council to authorize war is ahistorical. During the 1990s, our non-British allies compiled a record of consistent appeasement. After Iraq whittled away at the prerogatives of weapons inspectors, going so far as to deem areas as large as Washington "presidential palaces" and thus off-limits, China, France, and Russia refused to back even a toothless resolution admonishing Iraq for its lack of cooperation. After Iraq expelled the inspectors, France and Russia opposed pinprick bombing. If they considered bombing too strong a response to massive violations then, why would they support the vastly stronger alternative of full invasion in response to weaker violations now? It may be that our allies' reluctance to enforce Iraqi disarmament stems in part from their distaste for Bush and his cowboy style, disregard for environmental accords, and fondness for protectionism. But the lack of commitment to Iraqi disarmament on the part of France, Germany, and Russia long predates the Bush administration. And yet many American liberals prefer to reside in an alternate universe where the United Nations stands poised to defang Saddam if only the United States would be just a bit more reasonable.

There is one sentence in Tuesday's *Times* editorial that comes closest to expressing the true sentiments of antiwar liberals: "The world must be reassured that every possibility of a peaceful solution has been fully explored." Consider the implications: The character of the Iraqi crisis is such that there is *always* the possibility of a peaceful solution. At every point in time, Saddam permits the minimal level of inspections cooperation he can get away with. Whenever he is threatened, he backs down until the crisis subsides, only to ratchet up his defiance later. The only logical end to this cycle is Saddam's successful acquisition of a nuclear weapon, at which point disarmament, forcible or otherwise, will no longer be an option. Indeed, this would be the actual result of the policy favored by antiwar liberals—whether they consciously desire it or not. ■

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NOTEBOOK

LAW OF AVERAGES: In his State of the Union address, George W. Bush once again offered what has proved his most successful pitch for his proposed $674 billion tax cut: that if it's passed, "[n]inety-two million Americans will keep this year an average of almost $1,100 [the administration's exact figure is $1,083] more of their own money." According to the Lexis-Nexis database, this figure has been cited in the media more than 200 times in the three weeks since Bush first pitched the plan. (This number is slightly inflated by the presence of some two dozen identical letters to the editor printed by various newspapers—letters that eager GOP beavers copied verbatim from a website called *www.gopteamleader.com*; two newspapers, Utah's *Deseret News* and Wisconsin's *Wausau Daily Herald*, were clueless enough that each published the same letter twice over two different bylines.) Despite the many citations, however, only a handful of news sources have pointed out that the key element of the Bush claim is the word "average." The president's intention, of course, is to conflate the two meanings of the word "average," leaving the impression that, if the Bush plan passes, "average" taxpayers will receive that "average" savings of $1,083. They won't. As a study by the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center points out, taxpayers in the middle fifth of the income spectrum—i.e., "average" taxpayers—would receive an average tax cut of just $256. The administration's far larger figure is the result of averaging in the tax savings of the very rich: The top 1 percent of tax-filers would receive an average tax cut of $24,100; those with incomes of more than $1 million would receive an average cut of $90,200. But don't expect the mainstream media to explain this distinction. *The Christian Science Monitor* was utterly snookered, describing a "$1,000 per-person tax reduction, which the president says 92 million people will be eligible for." One of the few commentators who even tried to explain the significance of the "average" figure, CNN's John King, was nearly as flummoxed, stating lamely that the $1,083 figure "is an average. Your individual tax cut would be a little more or a little less, depending on your financial circumstance." Indeed, the White House propaganda has succeeded so well that even a few GOP partisans seem to have succumbed to it. Fox's Sean Hannity leads the pack, having on at least two occasions dropped the word "average" altogether. On January 10, for example, he badgered radio talk-show host Yolanda Gaskins, asserting, "Ninety-two million hardworking Americans are going to receive this year alone and then every year thereafter $1,083 because the president is reducing the amount of money they have to pay. Will you explain to those 92 million people why they shouldn't get that money?" Was Hannity deliberately lying or merely confused by the White House's expert spin? We're willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. A tougher case may be that of new Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who in a January 12 "Fox News Sunday" appearance argued, "When you say that there are 92 million people who are going to be handed a check for $1,000 this year, your viewers right now, is that a tax cut for the rich?" Frist is both smart enough and close enough to the White House that he presumably knows that 92 million Americans won't be getting $1,000 tax cuts. Which suggests that he may be comfortable doctoring more than just patients.

NEARSIGHTED: When Bush was pushing his *last* big tax cut on the campaign trail and during his first months in office, one of the main objections raised by critics was that it relied upon unreliable ten-year surplus projections. But, even with signs that the economy was slowing, the Bushies maintained that the long-term numbers would hold up regardless of circumstances. As Vice President-elect Dick Cheney put it in December 2000, "[W]e anticipate $4.6 trillion over the next ten years based on the structure that's already in place, and the most likely scenario, even if you have a recession, is that it's relatively short-term, doesn't affect the long-term, ten-year projections. So you've got to make sure you got your time frame straight here." Well, now that the administration's economic stewardship has contributed to those ten-year projections' going from massive surpluses to deficits as far as the eye can see, the White House has decided that perhaps it would prefer to stick to a shorter time frame from here on out. This week, Budget Director Mitch Daniels announced that the White House would no longer issue ten-year projections. "Those numbers would be, in my view, worse than a wasted effort," he told *The Washington Post*. Pity the White House didn't feel that way two years ago.

CLOAK AND SWAGGER: With the economy stagnating and war with Iraq looming, health care wasn't at the top of the president's list of State of the Union priorities. But what Bush did have to say wasn't encouraging. America is going through a period very similar to the early '90s: The entire health insurance system is breaking down, and the country needs to make a choice about how to reinvent it. Liberals and conservatives have very different ideas about how to make that decision, and it's a debate worth having. But rather than articulate his position and defend it, Bush did what he's done in the past: cloak his conservative position in liberal language. Consider this key passage in his speech: "[W]e must work toward a system in which all Americans have a good insurance policy, choose their own doctors, and seniors and low-income Americans receive the help they need. Instead of bureaucrats and trial lawyers and HMOs, we must put doctors and nurses and patients back in charge of American medicine." Listening to this description, you might think the heart of Bush's health care agenda was to move Americans out of managed care plans that restrict access to doctors and treatments. But his Medicare plan would do precisely the opposite. In order to get a prescription drug benefit, seniors would likely have to leave traditional Medicare—an old-fashioned, fee-for-service plan that allows seniors to see almost any doctor they want—and enroll in HMOs. No HMO, no drug coverage. Now, this is hardly an indefensible position. Principled conservatives—

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and even some thoughtful liberals—believe that the only way to make Medicare financially viable over the long run is to stop giving senior citizens such lavish health care. If seniors expect prescription drug coverage, the argument goes, then they'll have to live with less generous insurance overall—i.e., HMOs that offer fewer options for care. A principled conservative would say as much. Unfortunately, that's not who we have in the Oval Office.

NEXT WEEK, THE EXOTIC LOCALE OF HOOTERS: This winter, *National Geographic* has decided to take a walk on the wild side by publishing a special swimsuit issue à la *Sports Illustrated*. Titled "Swimsuits: 100 Years of Pictures," the collector's edition will be sold on newsstands for a whopping $9.95. But lest anyone accuse the normally highbrow magazine of bowing to prurient interests, editor-in-chief Bill Allen recently explained to NPR's Michele Norris that this cheesecake pictorial is, in fact, "really right in keeping with everything that we have done over all of these years. ... It's really a look at the wonderful photographs from our archives and looking at culture around the world. It's just a way that people have had of interacting with the oceans and the water throughout the last hundred years or so." Even when Norris pointed out that the issue's cover is hardly archival—it's a recent photo of a nubile young model draped across a Hawaiian beach, clad in a complex construct of strategically placed seashells—Allen remained undaunted: "Well, I will like to point out that it's a very *National Geographic* image when you have the background, which is rocks. That's geology. And you have the oceans, which has always been something that *National Geographic* has been interested in. And then, of course, the seashells. And I will point out, Michele, that they are from a family, mellilobranchia [sic]." Congratulations, *National Geographic*: You, too, are now part of a family. Meet your relatives *Gear*, *Stuff*, and *Maxim*.

PANDER PARTY: "We will fight to protect a woman's right to choose, and we will fight for affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity in our schools and workplaces." —Washington Governor Gary Locke, listing Democratic priorities in his response to the State of the Union address, January 28

"Above all, we will demand that this government advance our common purpose and not pander to narrow special interests."—Locke, the very next sentence

WE REPORT, THEY DECIDE: Last week's Notebook contained an item criticizing the Bush administration's decision to repeal a Clinton-era regulation guaranteeing emergency room access to people on Medicaid. Apparently, the item was so devastating that the White House reconsidered and agreed to let the regulation stand—even as we were going to press. Much as we'd like to take credit for the administration's sudden shift, it probably had more to do with the letters of objection filed by Democratic members of Congress, who were responding to the same front-page scoop by *The New York Times* that got our attention. ■

INSIDE THE BOX | Bruce Reed

PARENTAL GUIDANCE Bush says Iraq is rerun of bad movie he's seen before. Saddam's response: "I was just going to say the same about you."

NAPOLEON COMPLEX France and Germany take offense at Rumsfeld's disdain for "Old Europe": "If we don't stick up for little tyrants with global ambitions, who will?"

STREETWALKER Rove says populist Bush would choose Main Street over Wall Street every time: "That's why the only choice we give him is K Street!"

DON'T CALL US Report claims bin Laden got away by handing another terrorist his cell phone. CIA's response: "How were we supposed to know he found a plan with free roaming and long distance?"

THE BUCS STOP HERE Tampa Bay crushes Oakland in Super Bowl. What the NFL knows that Tom Ridge doesn't: The best defense always wins.

HUMMER BREAK GOP economic plan gives businesses tax incentive to buy big SUVs: "We don't have to choose between growth and the environment: We can have neither."

CHARLIE HUSTLE Pete Rose may get into Hall of Fame if he admits he bet on baseball. Selig's excuse: "That's not gambling—that's just getting paid in options."

DEAD OR ALIVE Bush offers Rx drugs to seniors who'll join HMOs. Next year's State of the Union proposal: private retirement accounts for seniors who agree to work till they're 90.

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White House Watch

Run On

By Ryan Lizza

A week before President Bush's State of the Union speech, Karl Rove had breakfast with some Washington reporters. When the conversation turned to the 2004 presidential election, Bush's senior political adviser noted, with calculated understatement, "In the aftermath of war, sometimes public attitudes change and people who successfully prosecuted wars are no longer in office. I think that happened recently in our experience." Everyone got the joke. By now it's a political cliché that Bush is obsessed with the idea that his father lost the 1992 election because he didn't refocus his attention on domestic issues after the Gulf war. Bush's State of the Union message was that he is not going to make the same mistake.

Facing the eerily similar preelection scenario of economic malaise and confrontation with Iraq, the White House labored mightily to promote the domestic portion of Bush's speech. The day before, Ari Fleischer stated flatly, "Most of the State of the Union will not be about Iraq." When the White House unveiled a special State of the Union website on the day of the speech, it included corny video testimonials about Bush's agenda from Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel Martinez, Commerce Secretary Don Evans, and Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. There was nothing from the administration's foreign policy team. Bush allies were instructed by the White House to emphasize the president's economic policies. Bush opened the speech with his domestic agenda and didn't mention Iraq until two-thirds of the way through. The next day, he traveled to Michigan to promote his new Medicare plan, and aides briefed reporters on the new domestic proposals. In other words, with Secretary of State Colin Powell set to deliver a speech on Saddam Hussein's weapons and Bush likely to make a major speech on Iraq when war does begin, the president was free to use Tuesday's speech to roll out what could be the key message of his 2004 reelection campaign: that he's not *just* a war president.

The first sign of the new election strategy was the return of Karen Hughes, Bush's communications guru, who left the White House last year and has been advising him from Texas. She was on television last Sunday, following the president out of church. Then she kept popping up in the photos the White House released of Bush's prep work for the speech. As members of Congress filed into the chamber Tuesday night, she sat silently in the balcony, surveying the floor.

In his new book, *The Right Man*, ex-Bush speechwriter David Frum argues that Hughes was marginalized after September 11. She was the brains behind Bush's most effective pre–September 11 speeches: his first address to Congress and his summer 2001 speech on stem-cell research. Hughes, Frum writes, "distilled a complicated issue into extremely simple language—and presented it to the nation in terms that reassured the country's vast political center that their president was a moderate, reasonable, and thoughtful person." It was Hughes who replaced every mention of the word "business" in Bush's speeches with "employers" and who demanded that the president speak of "moms and dads" rather than "parents," "tax relief" instead of "tax cuts." The reliance on Hughes's style came to an end, according to Frum, with the tone-deaf speech she wrote for Bush to deliver from the Oval Office on the evening after the terrorist attacks. The speech was a "doughy pudding of stale metaphors," he writes, "a hastily revised compassionate conservatism speech." Around the White House it soon became known as the "Awful Office Address."

But now that Bush is pivoting toward reelection, Hughes-speak is back with a vengeance. "Tax relief," "employers," "mom and dad," "boys and girls," and the compassion agenda all made comebacks in Tuesday's State of the Union pudding. Other trademarks of Bush's prewar electoral strategy seem to have returned as well. With an eye on Rove's coveted Catholic voters, the White House invited a nun to sit in the first lady's box. (Once a standard prop at Bush events, priests now seem to have fallen out of favor with the White House.) Also joining Laura Bush were residents of Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, the three key states for Bush's reelection.

To that end, the domestic portion of Bush's speech had two overriding and intertwining goals. The first was to plant Bush back in the political center. More than half the cost of his new economic plan is eaten up by the dividend tax cut, yet Bush led the economic section of his speech with a pitch for ending the marriage penalty and raising the child credit to $1,000, popular measures that represent only 22 percent of the plan. Then there were the micro-initiatives Bush pushed to update compassionate conservatism for the next presidential campaign: He proposed a tiny (it would take up 0.02 percent of the budget) mentoring program to help the children of prisoners; he shifted to the left on the war on drugs by emphasizing treatment for addiction rather than punishment; and, in the speech's one big surprise announcement, Bush asked for billions more to fight the AIDS plague in Africa, brazenly co-opting this Democratic issue after pocket-vetoing $200 million of emergency funding for such programs last year.

And that was the second hallmark of the domestic portion of the speech: anticipating and preempting likely attacks from Democrats. Bush seemed to have his eye on everyone in the Democratic field. Just as in 2000 he fought Al Gore to a draw on the traditionally Democratic issue of education, he is now trying to do the same on health care, the issue that helped sink his father's campaign and that is emerging as a dominant theme of the 2004 race. Representative Dick Gephardt and former Vermont Governor Howard Dean have made universal health insurance the centerpieces of their campaigns.

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Bush had a response for them Tuesday: "These problems will not be solved with a nationalized health care system that dictates coverage and rations care." Ex-trial lawyer John Edwards has also been singled out for special treatment: Bush recently promoted malpractice reform in Pennsylvania, a trip that a White House aide, speaking to the Associated Press, dubbed "Whack John Edwards Day." Tuesday night Bush continued the White House attack on Edwards's former profession: "To improve our health care system, we must address one of the prime causes of higher costs—the constant threat that physicians and hospitals will be unfairly sued," he said. "No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit."

Another emerging Democratic theme that Bush confronted is energy independence. His disastrous 2001 energy plan and Americans' heightened awareness of dependence on Middle Eastern oil since September 11 has left the president vulnerable. In his book, Frum notes that the original energy plan—an "incoherent mess"—was the result of a battle between Hughes, who wanted to emphasize conservation, and Dick Cheney, who wanted to emphasize production. At least rhetorically, Hughes has finally won that battle. In his speech, Bush didn't mention drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Instead, he rolled out a plan to help create pollution-free hydrogen fuel cell automobiles, the sort of idea he mocked in 2000. (Somewhere Al Gore sighed deeply in disgust.)

The other big ideas in Bush's speech concerned homeland security, an area where the Democratic presidential contenders are feeling increasingly confident. If Senator Bob Graham, the ranking Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, enters the race, he will attack Bush from the right on terrorism, arguing that Bush has been timid in going after groups like Hezbollah and issuing dire warnings of America's vulnerabilities. Bush beefed up his homeland-security bona fides by announcing "Project Bioshield." Edwards is making better intelligence collection a cornerstone of his homeland security platform. He proposes a new domestic intelligence agency that would be dedicated to "identifying, infiltrating, and stopping terrorist cells." On Tuesday, Bush seemed to preempt this line of attack when he called for a new "Terrorist Threat Integration Center" that will centralize the analysis of all terrorist-related intelligence collected by the government.

Even if dictated mostly by electoral concerns, it all adds up to a fairly ambitious domestic agenda. One could even argue that a president about to take the country to war should be paying *less* attention to fuel cells and prescription drugs than Bush apparently is. In the early '90s, with a crisis in the Middle East and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, wasn't Bush 41's unapologetic emphasis on foreign policy the responsible course? Then again, once war starts, who knows if Bush 43 will really fight for this new agenda. We've been here before. Days after September 11, a reporter asked Fleischer which domestic issues were now shelved. "None," Fleischer replied. But, according to Frum, Bush told his speechwriters a few weeks later in the Oval Office to forget about the home front. As long as there was a war, Frum writes, "there was no more domestic agenda." Then again, back then there wasn't a looming reelection campaign, either. ■

Has Congress wrecked the NIH?

Overtreated

By Alex Stone

Members of both political parties regularly hail the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as the "crown jewel" of the federal government. Indeed, ever since President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed it a "billion-dollar success story" in 1967, the NIH has often been celebrated as a model of legislative stewardship. Thanks to the level of bipartisan support it has received, the NIH has expanded greatly in recent years to become the largest source of federal funds for scientific research next to the Defense Department. This year, as budget lines across the government remain flat or suffer cuts, the NIH will receive its fifth consecutive budget increase, fulfilling a vow originally made by the Clinton administration to double funding for the agency by 2003. The lion's share of this year's budget increase is going to research aimed at the crucial task of bolstering the nation's defenses against biological terrorism. Speaking to reporters about this recent expansion, newly appointed NIH Director Elias Zerhouni explained why: "The NIH has its act together."

But a closer look at the NIH reveals a far less rosy picture. Ironically, the very enthusiasm that has led Congress to shower the NIH with funding has also undermined its ability to spend those funds effectively. For one thing, as the NIH has grown, so has its bureaucracy. As the name suggests, the NIH is not one agency but a collection of many. Currently, the NIH comprises 27 different institutes and centers, all loosely grouped around a central director's office. Each unit receives its mandate directly from Congress and, in turn, funds its own research within the NIH and at research institutions nationwide. When the NIH was relatively small, this structure caused few problems. But, as it has grown, the number of institutes and centers has risen dramatically—roughly one-third of the NIH's total units were created in the last decade and a half—resulting in nothing short of an administrative nightmare.

First, there is the problem of overhead. Every institute requires its own budget, staff, director's office, office of review, and various other ancillary structures. "There's a tremendous amount of inefficiency in that each institute has to have its own administrative apparatus," notes Zach Hall, former director of the NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. The added administrative costs associated with maintaining so many institutes diverts funds away from research, counteracting the impact of Congress's recent budget increases. "When you have increasing numbers of administrative entities, you end up with less science

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actually being conducted for every dollar that's appropriated," notes Robert Rich, executive associate dean of Emory School of Medicine, who has testified before Congress about NIH expansion.

Then there are the logistical headaches involved in trying to integrate the efforts of all these units. To cite one example, the NIH lacks sufficient resources to link the e-mail addresses and research databases of its many institutes, a shortcoming that makes it difficult for scientists to collaborate and share data. Making matters worse, the NIH director, who is charged with overseeing and coordinating the individual agencies, lacks the power, staff, and funding to do so effectively. Even as Congress has bankrolled the NIH's massive expansion, it has failed to outfit the director's office to cope with this expansion. As a result, the director can rarely initiate new projects or modify existing ones in response to changing national needs. "The director of NIH has a huge job with too many institutes reporting to him and too little power to influence what those institutes do," notes Princeton biologist Leon Rosenberg, who chaired a 1998 commission on the NIH.

This lack of cohesion undermines initiatives that require cooperation between institutes. Five years ago, for example, a group of neuroscientists called for the creation of a comprehensive DNA "map" to link regions of the brain to specific genes. The blueprint for this effort was based on a similar project at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), where scientists have long used this kind of tool to study the roles various genes play in the growth of different types of tumors. But, whereas the cancer project was carried out under the aegis of one large institute, the brain map required the collaboration of several smaller ones. As a result, the effort failed. "Everyone agreed on it," notes former National Institute of Mental Health Director Steven Hyman. "It fizzled out because it involved too many different NIH components, and there was no one boss, no one pot of money, and no one priority-setting process."

This sort of problem has become increasingly widespread because, even as the general trend in science has been toward multidisciplinary research, the trend at the NIH has been to balkanize, rather than unify, research agendas. The study of neurological diseases, for example, is needlessly spread out among several agencies, despite the fact that, as Hyman notes, "the separation is almost entirely unwarranted at the basic scientific level." This separation has thwarted many projects that would likely have benefited patients with brain disorders. In 2000, for example, Parkinson's disease activists requested a clinical trial on treating depression in Parkinson's patients. The challenge was to find medications effective against depression—a common by-product of Parkinson's—that would not exacerbate the underlying disorder. But the project was hamstrung from the beginning because scientists studying Parkinson's disease were funded by a different institute from those researching depression. After several false starts, the effort was abandoned.

The proliferation of separate but often overlapping institutes has little to do with scientific concerns and has frequently been opposed by the NIH leadership. But, as Rosenberg notes, "The director never is successful in trying to block the creation of new institutes." During his recent six-year stint as NIH director, Nobel Laureate Harold Varmus unsuccessfully opposed the addition of no fewer than three new agencies. So what is responsible for the creation of new institute after new institute? The answer, in a word, is politics.

THE STUDY OF drug addiction at the NIH, for instance, is split between two institutes, one for alcohol and another for all other types of drugs. From a physiological perspective, this is absurd: Alcohol behaves like any other addictive substance. "Scientifically, we know that it's all the same system," explains Hall. "In terms of the biology, there is absolutely no question that it would make sense to merge them." But representatives from both the alcoholic beverage industry and alcoholism patient groups oppose any association with illegal drugs. "People who are alcoholics don't want to be considered drug addicts," notes Hall. And so Congress passed legislation in 1974 authorizing the creation of a separate National Institute on Drug Abuse.

In other cases, the concerns that lead Congress to establish a new institute are even more parochial. Take the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), the NIH's most recent addition. The legislation authorizing the new institute was almost universally opposed by scientists at the NIH and by several NIH supporters in Congress. A coalition of 23 medical advocacy groups wrote a formal letter protesting the institute on the grounds that it would isolate imaging research from the study of specific illnesses. "Separating things leads to a divorce between those who know the technique and those who are studying disease and physiology," explains Varmus. "You want the people who know the technology and who study the disease to be involved in the same activity." But then–Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (who, according to a press release by the American Psychological Society, was "acting partly at the urging of a hometown neighbor who is a radiologist") pushed the bill through, despite these objections, by suspending normal Senate rules at the close of the 2000 session. The move raised hackles throughout the NIH. "It was hideous," notes one health expert. "It was all about the dignity of radiology—fuck science."

Yet, as Varmus has publicly noted, "[t]he unfortunate process by which the NIBIB was established is not unprecedented or even unusual." Indeed, a similar miscarriage occurred when Congress created the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine in 1998—against the will of the NIH director and numerous experts. This time the point man was Senator Tom Harkin, who was acting out of the conviction that bee pollen had cured his allergies and acupuncture had helped ease his terminally ill brother's pain. "The whole operation would work better if we were looking at alternative practices within each insti-

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tute and for each disease," says Varmus. "It doesn't make a lot of sense to do it within the confines of one institute."

The problem has become serious enough that Congress recently commissioned the National Academy of Sciences to issue a formal report, due out this summer, on the organization of the NIH. But recent history suggests that little will come of it. Several such reports have been published in recent years, including one in 1984 and another in 1998, both of which noted the dangers associated with having too many institutes, a weak director, and insufficient managerial capacities. Yet Congress has by and large ignored them. Indeed, since 1984 the NIH's administrative bureaucracy has undergone its most precipitous expansion ever. At the current rate, the NIH will have roughly 50 institutes by mid-century. "At some point," says NIH Research Training Officer Walter Schaffer, "it's going to implode on itself by its own weight."

So what's to be done? For starters, a certain measure of consolidation is necessary. Some experts, including Varmus, have advocated clustering NIH agencies around broad scientific fields. Thus, all brain research, from neurobiology to psychiatry, would be funded by one large institute; all research on internal medicine would be funded by another.

Limits should also be placed on the creation of new agencies. History has shown that the NIH can respond to prevailing national health concerns without added bureaucracy. In the 1960s, it successfully expanded its support for research on lung disease through the National Heart Institute (now the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute). In the 1980s, when the AIDS pandemic rose to the level of a national health crisis, several existing institutes effectively answered the call. "The reason we have so many more institutes today than we did twenty years ago," observes Rich, "is a reflection of a political process rather than of scientific need." The Association of American Medical Colleges, a group that monitors the NIH, has called for an external advisory body to formally review all proposals for major organizational change. Given the negligence that has accompanied such changes in the past, this is certainly a good idea.

Rather than add bureaucracy, Congress should use future budget increases to strengthen the more derelict sectors of the NIH. Even after the doubling of its budget, many smaller NIH agencies, such as the National Institute of Nursing Research and the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, lack sufficient funds to carry out large-scale initiatives, including broad clinical trials to test the efficacy of new treatments. Marked disparities also exist among disease research budgets. AIDS, for instance, receives more money than 16 other illnesses with higher annual mortality rates, including heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease. There are, in other words, plenty of places where the NIH could use additional funding. But even more important than the funding is the imperative that it be spent wisely—an imperative Congress seems unable to understand. ■

Caracas Dispatch

Crude Analysis

By JEREMY KAHN

Venezuelans love Coca-Cola. They affectionately refer to the soft drink as "black champagne," and its absence from store shelves here is considered one of the hardest things to bear about the nation's nine-week-old general strike. So it was an important symbolic gesture when Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, whose ouster the strikers desire, dispatched soldiers to seize stocks of the precious soda from the warehouses of the local Coke bottler, whose workers had walked off the job in support of the strike. Chávez threatened to "liberate" more warehouses if their owners didn't reopen for business. That drew a rebuke from U.S. Ambassador Charles Shapiro, who said he was "concerned and disappointed" by Chávez's actions.

The United States never likes to see a foreign government illegally expropriate the inventory of a private business—especially when that company is associated with as enduring an American icon as Coca-Cola. But Shapiro has been careful to temper his criticism of Chávez, despite the fact that this self-professed admirer of Fidel Castro is hardly on George W. Bush's buddy list. That's because U.S. policy toward Venezuela is less about black champagne than black gold. Critics claim the Bush administration's push for regime change in Iraq is motivated by oil, but in Venezuela the exact opposite is true: Oil is the reason the United States is leaving Chávez in power.

It's not that the United States has suddenly decided Chávez is a good guy. But, with a Middle East war looming, America needs Venezuela's oil. The United States normally imports 14 percent of its oil—1.5 million barrels per day—from Venezuela, the world's fifth-largest petroleum producer and home to the Western hemisphere's largest proven reserves. Many Gulf Coast refineries in Louisiana and Mississippi are specially configured to process Venezuela's heavy, sour crude. But the strike has crippled the country's oil industry, cutting exports by 75 percent. The loss of Venezuelan oil supplies has helped send U.S. petroleum reserves to their lowest levels since 1975 and has helped drive up prices at the gas pump five cents nationwide. If Venezuelan production doesn't resume soon, prices will be at least ten cents higher by summer.

More importantly, Venezuela's crisis threatens to seriously complicate the Bush administration's planning for war with Iraq. OPEC, with plenty of behind-the-scenes

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pressure from the United States, voted in mid-January to boost production quotas by 1.5 million barrels per day, but that will make up less than half the total shortfall from Venezuela. Plus, the fresh crude won't arrive immediately. Most will come from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and it takes 45 to 60 days for a tanker to steam from the Middle East to the United States, compared with just four to eight days from Venezuela. A war would almost certainly result in a temporary loss of Iraq's two million barrels per day, and it might curtail production elsewhere in the Middle East, too. "We can make up for a disruption in supply from either Venezuela or Iraq, but not both," says Daniel Yergin, president of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, a firm that tracks the international oil market.

That explains why the United States has suddenly launched a major diplomatic effort to resolve Venezuela's political crisis. There is little doubt the Bush administration would prefer to see regime change in Venezuela. Chávez, a former paratrooper turned leftist populist, has irritated the United States ever since he was first elected in 1998. He promised Venezuelans a revolution loosely modeled on Castro's Cuba and began shipping oil to Havana at subsidized prices. He went on a grand tour of rogue states, cozying up to Iran and Libya and referring to Saddam Hussein as "my brother." And he pushed for the passage of a new "hydrocarbons law" that effectively ended new foreign investment in Venezuela's oil sector. Twice elected with majorities approaching 60 percent, Chávez's increasingly authoritarian tendencies have alienated large segments of the country. Today, he enjoys the support of poorer Venezuelans but is reviled by the majority of middle-class and richer members of society.

But the Bush administration's first attempt to hasten Chávez's exit from Miraflores Palace, the Venezuelan presidential residence, was hopelessly ham-handed. The White House seemed to endorse—and, some speculate, covertly helped plan—an abortive April coup against Chávez that even many of his opponents denounced as undemocratic. The administration was deeply embarrassed when Chávez was restored to power after 48 hours.

Until recently, the United States had been content to let the Organization of American States (OAS) take the lead in brokering a settlement between Chávez and the coalition of labor unions, business groups, and civic organizations—called the Democratic Coordinator—that oppose him. But the OAS-sponsored talks at Caracas's Hotel Melia have dragged on for months with little progress. Despite moving into the Melia to personally oversee the negotiations, the best OAS Secretary General Cesar Gaviria has been able to do is convince both sides to agree on the need for a "constitutional" solution to the crisis. Even Gaviria admitted in an interview on January 14 that the government and the opposition remained far apart on what exactly "constitutional" means.

With an attack on Iraq imminent, the Bush administration can't afford to wait. So for the moment, at least, it has subordinated its desire to see Chávez out of power to its desire to see oil flowing out of Venezuela again. "Right now, we don't have much choice but to deal with him," says one State Department official. In fact, Chávez and the White House have never broken off contact altogether—the oil relationship is too important. "The ambassador in Caracas with the best access to the government is still the U.S. ambassador," says another Western ambassador in the city. U.S. oil companies have continued to operate facilities near Lake Maracaibo on behalf of Venezuela's state-owned oil firm Petróleos de Venezuela. Perhaps that's why Chávez has recently made more accommodating statements about the United States, telling American reporters that his revolution is based on America's own founding principles.

Having learned its lesson from April's fiasco, the United States has made it clear to Chávez's opponents that it won't abide another coup. "We wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole," the State Department official says. Plus, a coup might well fail. After being restored to power in April, Chávez purged the military of suspected dissidents. "It's not at all clear that a sizable percentage of the military would line up against Chávez," the State Department official says.

THE NEW AMERICAN diplomatic push centers on a group called "The Friends of Venezuela," which consists of Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain, along with the United States. It's a clever maneuver designed to head off a rival proposal by Brazil's new left-leaning president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. At Lula's inauguration, Chávez called for the formation of an international coalition to help resolve Venezuela's crisis. He was clearly looking for leverage over the opposition, and Lula, whom Chávez considers a good friend, seemed ready to oblige. Lula's "Group of Friends" would have offered Chávez international allies—including Algeria, Cuba, and Iran—that were sympathetic to his politics. Instead, the United States has co-opted Lula's idea and turned it to its own purposes. It successfully cajoled Brazil to agree to a much more neutral set of participants and brushed aside Chávez's wishes to expand the group beyond the six members the United States selected.

The Friends of Venezuela, which held its first meeting in Washington last week with Secretary of State Colin Powell present, wasted no time in ramping up the pressure on Chávez and the opposition. The goal is to convince both sides to accept one of two solutions broached by America's favorite back-channel diplomat, former President Jimmy Carter, during a recent visit to Caracas. One proposal calls for a referendum on Chávez's presidency on August 19, 2003; the other would involve amending the constitution to reduce the president's term from six years to four, leading to new elections before the end of the year.

While Chávez has struck a defiant tone in recent public remarks, even threatening to walk away from the talks, both sides are in the mood to deal, according to sources close to the negotiations. "With both the U.S. and Brazil speaking

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with one voice, Chávez has to negotiate," says one European diplomat in Caracas. "He can't afford to be totally isolated internationally." After all, each day the strike persists, Venezuela loses market share in the world oil markets to other nations. And, while some of those customers will return to Venezuela when the oil starts flowing, some of them may defect for good. That will make it hard for Venezuela—which derives 80 percent of its export income from oil—to recover from the strike.

SIMPLY PUT, THE toll from the strike, which began on December 2, has been enormous. Lines for gasoline stretch for miles, and there are shortages of some basic foodstuffs. The government, which derives half of its revenue from Petróleos de Venezuela, has lost more than $4 billion so far. The economy, already in recession, could contract as much as 20 percent this year, and the country may be forced to default on its $18 billion in foreign debt. The central bank has suspended dollar auctions and is considering price controls in an effort to stem the decline of the country's currency, which has lost almost one-third of its value since the crisis began.

The strike's human costs are also mounting. The daily marches and countermarches regularly end in tear gas and rubber bullets. And clashes between Chávez supporters and opponents have resulted in six deaths so far. "The risk of a serious escalation in political violence is significant," says the OAS's Gaviria.

But, despite all this, Chávez remains in power. And the strike cuts both ways, sapping the economic strength of the opposition, which is largely composed of middle-class workers and wealthy business interests. That explains why the opposition, having failed in its initial goal of quickly forcing Chávez's resignation, is desperate for a face-saving way out. That is especially true after the Venezuelan Supreme Court ruled that its efforts to force a referendum on Chávez's presidency before August were unconstitutional. "No one thought the strike would go on for this long," says Horacio Medina, a leader of the striking oil workers.

Given the opportunity, many believe Chávez will choose elections. That's because, while he's certain to lose a referendum, no single opposition politician enjoys as much support as he does. "If he still thinks that he has chances in an election, then he will opt for them," says another top European diplomat in Caracas. Plus, elections—which require the Venezuelan constitution to be amended—will take time to organize, perhaps allowing Chávez to engineer a political comeback.

The Bush administration believes Chávez will be voted out eventually. "He's lost his mandate to govern," says a senior State Department official in Washington. But for now the United States seems content to let him stay in office for several more months. By then, if all goes according to plan, Saddam will be history. And perhaps then Venezuelans will be able to toast their own regime—maybe with a Coke. ■

Bush's inspections blunder.

End Game

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

FOR SUPPORTERS OF President Bush's Iraq policy, this seemed a good week indeed. In the presentation to the United Nations by chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, they saw the outlines of a casus belli. And in the president's State of the Union address, they heard a forceful summons to war. "America's purpose," Bush declared in a not-so-subtle swipe at the United Nations, "is more than to follow a process—it is to achieve a result." But, at least to judge by the reactions of European leaders, U.N. functionaries, and Democratic Party spokesmen, a casus belli is in the eye of the beholder. After the release of the Blix report, French President Jacques Chirac sniffed that "nothing justifies military action against Iraq." Echoing this claim, Moscow's foreign affairs spokesman Alexander Yakovenko reiterated that "international inspectors should be given the opportunity to continue their work." U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, too, pleaded for more time. For good measure, the day after the State of the Union France and Germany tabled a U.S. request for NATO assistance in the war against Iraq. At home, meanwhile, neither the Blix report nor Bush's speech seemed to make the slightest impression on Democrats. In the Democratic response to the State of the Union, Washington Governor Gary Locke maintained that Bush should stay the course, "insisting on strong and unfettered inspections." For his part, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle was still complaining that "we need to have more positive proof" of Iraq's weapons and calling for the inspectors to be given another chance. No matter how hard the Bush team might try, it seems the issue of weapons inspections just won't go away.

For months now, the worst-kept secret in Washington has been that the administration never really believed the U.N. inspection regime in Iraq would work. Last August, before Bush publicly endorsed inspections, Vice President Dick Cheney predicted that a "return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of [Saddam's] compliance with U.N. resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow back in his box." The second-worst-kept secret is that many in the administration never really *wanted* the inspections regime to work. When Colin Powell initially proposed the idea of going down the inspections route, officials at the Pentagon and the White House scoffed. But they subsequently persuaded themselves Saddam would never cooperate with them. The problem is that while these officials viewed inspections as a tactical ploy, everyone else—the Europeans, the inspectors themselves, even the American public—took them seriously. This lack of candor is about

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to exact a steep price from the United States.

With one month to go before a probable U.S. war against Iraq, the administration has become caught in a bind of its own devising. By insisting, as Powell did last week, that "inspections will not work" (three weeks ago, Powell just as confidently asserted, "The inspectors are really now starting to gain momentum"), the Bush team finds itself in the awkward position of disowning a process to which the president himself has publicly committed the United States. This somersault has brought several members of the Bush team back to Cheney's point: The administration would have been better off had it never gone to the United Nations in the first place.

POWELL FIRST MADE his case for going to the United Nations at the White House last August. According to administration officials, the secretary of state won Bush over to his recommendation with two lines of reasoning. First, taking America's case to the Security Council would mollify the international community, particularly the Europeans. If the world did not respond forcefully to Iraqi obstruction, the United States could always act unilaterally. Second, Powell argued that U.N. inspections would be sufficiently aggressive to make any obstruction obvious to the world and, hence, create a pretext for military action. Impressed with the cost-free logic of Powell's argument, Bush and his team signed off on a new U.N. resolution. Before long, the president was assuring Americans that if the United Nations forced Saddam to comply with its resolutions, it would fulfill the U.S. goal of regime change by "chang[ing] the nature of the Iraqi regime itself."

The charade finally ground to a halt at last week's special U.N. session in New York on terrorism. Originally, U.N. Ambassador John Negroponte was to represent the United States. But an impassioned plea from French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin persuaded Powell, who quite reasonably assumed that he was being invited to discuss terrorism, to go himself. De Villepin and Powell had become fast friends while negotiating the U.N. resolution—so much so that Powell even took a call from de Villepin as he was about to walk down the aisle at his daughter's wedding. "Their relationship was the glue that kept this together," an admiring official burbled to *The New York Times*. At last week's conference, however, de Villepin repaid his American counterpart by publicly humiliating him, telling a bank of TV cameras that "nothing justifies envisaging military action" against Iraq. "[Powell] was ambushed, plain and simple," says one State Department official. "[The French] thought showing up a secretary of state would play well at home. What they don't realize is they just lost the only friend they have here." Powell was said by aides to be privately furious, fuming that France will never lend its imprimatur to military action and that its public statements have only emboldened Saddam.

But the stakes are higher than Powell's pride. Indeed, the effects of the administration's inspections bluff are likely to constrain the United States, at least until Iraq is liberated. Administration hawks, for their part, always knew that traveling down this road was a calculated risk—because it relied on the premise that Saddam would "screw this up," as an administration official put it to *The Washington Post* last week, as well as on Powell's assurance that the inspections would be sufficiently rigorous to reveal him screwing up. True, the Iraqi dictator boasts a long history of miscalculation. But even dictators learn from their mistakes, and, in this instance, the stakes for Saddam are his very survival. "When Saddam is aware that he is in danger, he will cooperate and open up a few palaces," says Amatzia Baram, the author of *Building Toward Crisis: Saddam Husayn's Strategy for Survival*. "He will never provide a casus belli." He certainly has proved adept at robbing the United States of justifications for war in the past, as the Clinton team learned during the numerous military buildups and retreats it ordered in the Persian Gulf.

There is also the inconvenient fact that Bush has publicly committed himself to the inspections process. And, until that process hits a visible snag, it is hard for Bush to declare with any semblance of credibility that it has obviously failed. "The administration never explained what the casus belli was and backed into inspections as a way to find one," says Henry D. Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. Indeed, it was Bush, not Kofi Annan, who challenged the United Nations to prove its relevance by ensuring that Saddam obey its resolutions and who orchestrated the Security Council vote that sent inspectors back into Iraq. And it was Bush, not Blix, who publicly attached so much importance to inspections that Iraqi compliance with them would "change the nature of the Iraqi regime." To argue that because we are losing at this game we now want to play another creates the impression that the United States, not Saddam, is obstructing the process. This is why, in light of the fact that the inspectors have yet to stumble across a significant cache of weapons or encounter blatant Iraqi obstruction, the president's insistence that he is "sick and tired of the lies and deception" rings hollow. True, Blix delivered a lawyerly indictment of Iraqi evasions this week. But he also made a case for more time by boasting of, among other things, the robust "capability which has been built up" by his team. For his part, nuclear inspections chief Mohamed ElBaradei predicted that he should be able "within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons program." When even the inspectors insist that inspections are working, it is hard to convince the public otherwise.

This is doubly true because the very fact of an ongoing inspections process has persuaded many that the Iraqi threat has receded. As *The New York Times*' Bill Keller puts it, "The presence of 200 inspectors and American technical surveillance is not exactly a lockdown, but it limits what [Saddam] can get away with." Every time the inspectors praise Iraqi cooperation, every "satisfactory" grade they give Saddam—all these things gradually convince the public, both here and abroad, that the Iraqi threat is "contained." Nor have the

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inspectors done anything to clarify this mistaken impression. "Blix keeps referring to Iraqi cooperation," says Pentagon adviser Richard Perle, taking note of Blix's claim that "Iraq has on the whole cooperated rather well so far." But, musing that we are in the midst of a "Blix-krieg," Perle wonders, "What cooperation? [The Iraqis] show him the same empty buildings over and over." For his part, ElBaradei argued in the midst of his report to the Security Council this week that "the presence of international inspectors in Iraq today continues to serve as an effective deterrent to and insurance against resumption of programs to develop weapons of mass destruction." Not surprisingly, then, seven of ten Americans polled by ABC News and *The Washington Post* last week favor extending inspections, while fewer and fewer approve of Bush's handling of the issue. (In the most recent ABC/*Post* poll, support for attacking Iraq has declined to 50 percent from 71 percent one year ago.) The appearance of workable inspections has also emboldened opponents of toppling Saddam here at home, who can now rely on the euphemistic mantra "Give the inspectors a chance" and charge Bush with creating a "credibility gap" if he does otherwise.

IF THIS IS true at home, it is even truer abroad. Far from mollifying the Europeans, Bush's decision to invite them into the decision-making process has only amplified their vocal opposition. Reviving U.N. inspections, says Kenneth Adelman, a former Reagan administration official close to the Bush team, "empowered European nations ... whose purpose is to block effective action." Or, as one administration official puts it, "Going to the U.N. just guaranteed that more people would be pissed off when we ignore them." Where European governments in November were objecting only to unilateral military action, today German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder categorically rejects the use of force—with or without U.N. sanction—and Germany's admirers in Paris echo that "nothing" justifies action against Iraq. Opinion polls throughout Western Europe show that the percentage of people supporting military action against Iraq has declined consistently as inspections have worn on. A *Guardian* newspaper poll last week found that, even in Great Britain, support for an attack had dropped to 30 percent, down from 42 percent before inspections began.

Nor will the United Nations itself go quietly. When Bush handed Saddam's fate to the Security Council, he handed it not only to member states with a history of coddling Iraq but to an organization that has a vested interest in the success of what is, after all, a U.N. enterprise—a vested interest neatly exemplified in the secretary-general's insistence that inspections should continue in perpetuity. Moreover, even if Blix were endowed with the tenacity of his predecessor, Richard Butler, the prospect that he would stumble across a persuasive casus belli was always slim. The Iraqis long ago learned "how to conceal, deceive, and deny," as former chief nuclear inspector David Kay points out, so well that the most significant weapons revelations of the 1990s came not from the seven-year weapons inspections regime but rather from Iraqi defectors. And, if Blix's team does find evidence of Iraqi noncompliance, it surely will not be of the "smoking gun" variety. More likely, it will come in the form of what former deputy chairman of U.N. weapons inspections Charles Duelfer calls "salami slices"—disagreements over peripheral issues such as the proper forum for interviewing scientists.

These disagreements reduce Bush to pleading the case for war against Iraq not on the basis of sweeping principles or blatant Iraqi misdeeds but because Saddam has temporarily placed a warehouse or chicken farm off-limits. Thus, rather than announce that the United States is going to war because Saddam is a brutal dictator who cannot be trusted with weapons of mass destruction and who is in violation of a catalogue of U.N. resolutions—a case Bush made quite convincingly in a speech he delivered in Cincinnati last year detailing Saddam's misdeeds—the president is poised to go to war on the basis of... well, it's no longer so clear. The administration, says Danielle Pletka, a Middle East expert at the American Enterprise Institute and a board member of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, "should have defined the problem not only in terms of disarmament but made clear that Saddam's regime is one of the vilest in history." But, having defined the problem in terms of his gadgets rather than his tyranny, the president now has little choice but to continue speaking the language of arms control. Which is a shame, because what truly frightens the Bush team—and what should frighten every American—is not the precise nature of Iraq's arsenal but the nature of the man who controls it.

So how does the administration get out of the inspections trap? One way would be to orchestrate an "Adlai Stevenson" moment in which the Bush team unveils a smoking gun—à la Stevenson's presentation to the United Nations 40 years ago of photographs showing missiles in Cuba. The problem is, the administration has no smoking gun. What it has instead, according to senior administration officials, is a collection of guns that smell vaguely smoky, which a task force under deputy national security adviser Stephen Hadley is busily sifting through—photographs of activity around suspected weapons sites, evidence of Iraqi attempts to conceal items before the arrival of weapons inspectors, and communications intercepts. Powell plans to present this evidence to the United Nations on February 5. But State Department and Pentagon officials remain far from certain that even a dramatic presentation will change many minds overseas, where any evidence that bolsters America's case tends to be viewed as suspect.

Option number two is to hope that the French and others will abandon their opposition on the eve of war, when the prospect of an Iraq closed to French business looms more immediately. If even this fails to budge the Europeans, the argument goes, then surely images of liberated Iraqis rejoicing in the streets will. If all this seems like wishful thinking, well, this is where the inspections route has gotten the administration. Its members were right the first time around: The inspections process was bound to be a sham. But so was their effort to pretend it was anything else. ■

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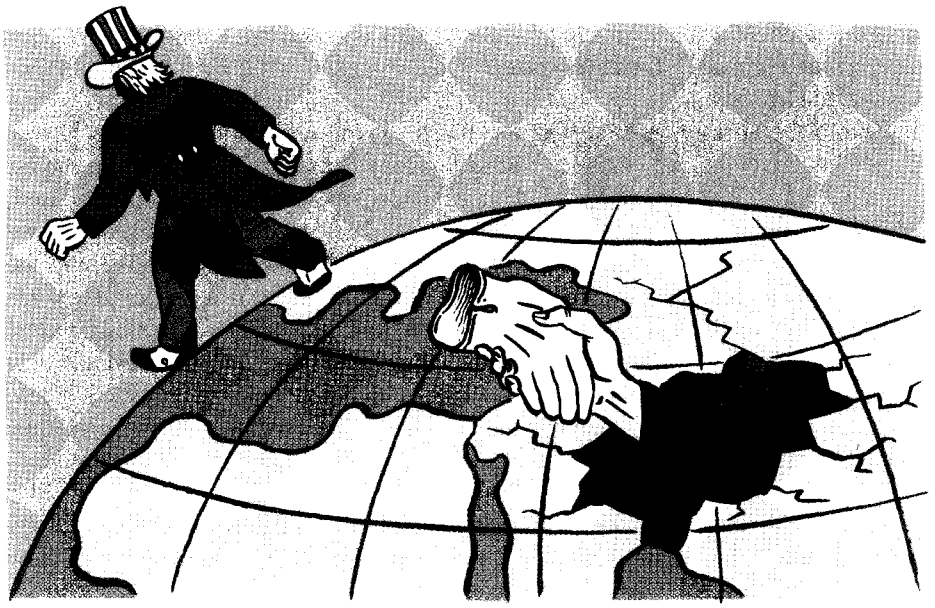
Memories of a free Iraq.

The Fire Last Time

By Zainab Al-Suwaij



As war with Iraq draws closer, commentators, journalists, and policymakers frequently question whether the Iraqi people would really support the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. But that question has already been answered. Although Americans remember the Gulf war, many do not realize that, for a few momentous days immediately after it, much of Iraq rose up in open rebellion against Saddam's regime. In fact, 15 out of 18 Iraqi provinces rebelled. I was one of the rebels.

For over a decade, I have stayed silent about what I saw. But now, as the world considers freeing Iraq from Saddam's rule, I feel compelled to bear witness to the last time Iraqis tried to liberate their country.

In February 1991, I was living with my grandparents in Karbala, a city of roughly 350,000 an hour southwest of Baghdad. The Gulf war was raging, and my family and I often listened to Voice of America for news free of Iraqi-government control. We heard President George H.W. Bush repeatedly assure us that if the Iraqi people rose up against Saddam, the United States stood ready to help them. "There's another way for the bloodshed to stop," Bush had said, "and that is for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside." I was excited by Bush's words, but, after two decades of living under the brutal rule of Saddam's Baath Party, it was impossible for me to imagine we would ever be liberated. Even though millions of Iraqis dreamed of overthrowing Saddam, we were afraid to speak about it and doubted anyone would ever come to help us. I felt the world had abandoned us.

If an uprising was going to break out, I thought, it certainly wasn't going to be in Karbala, where security was unusually tight, even for a police state. Saddam had special reason to worry about Karbala. For centuries, Karbala has been a sacred place for Shiite Muslims, who are largely shut out from the upper levels of Iraq's secular, Sunni-dominated regime. Karbala is home to two sacred shrines that honor two of the key figures in Shiite history, Imam Hussein and his brother Abbas; many elderly Shiites retire to Karbala to spend the last years of their lives as "neighbors" to Imam Hussein before being buried in one of the city's vast cemeteries. Because of the shrines, Iran refrained from bombing Karbala during its war with Iraq, a decision that only made Saddam more suspicious of Karbala residents.

Because of the city's large percentage of Shiites, the Iraqi government has used every method possible to demonstrate its control of Karbala. Every year, on the anniversary of Imam Hussein's martyrdom, Shiites observe ten days of mourning; during this period, Shiites perform the Aza, a passion play that depicts events leading up to the imam's murder. When Saddam came to power, he banned public performances of the Aza. Saddam also left his mark on the shrines honoring Imam Hussein and Abbas, which were infiltrated by the secret police. Built around their two graves, the shrines were once elaborate constructions topped with golden domes, but now the gold tiles have been removed and replaced with counterfeit metal. Although the shrines remained open to worshippers, when I would visit them I saw rooms within the buildings that had been used by secret police for interrogation—signs the police were prepared to clamp down hard on any Shiite agitation.

Even by Iraqi standards, Karbala was claustrophobic—in

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Karbala, even more than in the rest of Iraq, you learned not to trust anyone. Though the secret police set up shop in the two shrines, they had a pervasive presence in all parts of the city. The city crawled with informers. Anyone you met—in the streets, in school, at the mosques—might be an agent of the secret police, whose ranks ranged from teenage boys to elderly grandmothers. At my high school, I felt enormous pressure to join Saddam's Baath Party. I was not allowed to receive my high school diploma unless I signed up for the party. I refused because I didn't want my name associated in any way with Saddam's crimes. The high school officials denied me my diploma and forced me to sign a document stating that if I joined any other political party, the regime had the right to kill me. This document was added to my school file, and I thereafter tried to keep a low profile because I felt informers were watching me.

On March 1, 1991, I was fasting and praying with other women in the shrine of Imam Hussein. That day, I was reading prayers for illiterate women, a custom I had performed since childhood. Suddenly, a woman ran into the mosque and announced, "Our army has pulled out of Kuwait."

I burst into tears—not out of regret for the Iraqi army, but because I had hoped Saddam's regime might fall while most of his military was in Kuwait. During the Gulf war, we frequently saw young men in the street who had deserted the Iraqi army in Kuwait and returned to their hometown. Now, I worried, with the war over, there would be less reason for people to desert the army, and the elite Republican Guard would return and increase Saddam's control over the country. My hopes of freedom seemed to fade.

I was still crying when I left the shrine. I was turning 20 the next day, and I suddenly understood that I had no future in Iraq. As long as Saddam ruled, I could not live as a free person. I had no diploma, I couldn't speak openly about my political and religious beliefs, and my relatives could—and did—disappear at any given minute. Iraq under Saddam was a dead end.

I cried all the way home. People stared at me on the street as tears soaked my *hijab*. It may be hard for non-Iraqis to understand why I was so distraught, why I could not imagine continuing to live under Saddam's rule. But the years of war with Iran, Kuwait, and now the United States and its allies, coupled with Saddam's brutal war against his own people, had sucked the life out of me. And the news that the army would be returning from Kuwait intact meant that my limited hope for freedom was now crushed.

Imam Hussein's shrine had always been my place of comfort, and, on March 3, I went back to pray. Walking along Shara'a Al Abbas, Karbala's main street, I noticed that the mood was tense. The street was filled with more secret police than usual. They stood around and talked nervously.

Afternoon prayers that day in Imam Hussein's shrine lasted only one hour, and then the soldiers immediately kicked us out. I had never seen the shrine shut down like this—the tension in Karbala was rising fast. As I left the shrine, I saw a tank and machine guns stationed in the center of the city. The moment I returned home, I tuned in to the Voice of Free Iraq, an opposition radio station that had started broadcasting out of Cyprus in January 1991, and learned that an uprising had started in Basra and spread north and east to the cities along the Iranian border. Evidently, people across Iraq had decided that now was the time to act, before all the troops could return from Kuwait. Here was a window to make a difference, while Saddam's army was still in retreat and the president of the United States was promising support. "This is amazing," I thought. "Will our turn ever come?"

Two days later, on March 5, as I was having breakfast, our neighbor Umali came to see us. Umali's family was originally from Iran, and, although Saddam had expelled many people we thought were of Iranian origin years earlier, she had paid a bribe to continue living in Karbala. "They are coming!" she told me. "Who?" I asked. "The uprising fighters. They have already liberated Basra and Najaf, and now they are coming to Karbala." I didn't know who exactly these fighters were, but, as I would later see with my own eyes, they were a loose coalition of regular Iraqis of all backgrounds—soldiers who had deserted, high school students, and older people who could still remember a time before Baath Party rule—who had risen up with little organization and now were moving across the area.

I jumped up and ran outside. The streets were filled with troops, secret police, and heavy weaponry. Guns were drawn. Soldiers were shouting into loudspeakers, ordering everyone to return to their houses and shut their doors. To my surprise, dozens of young men were defying the soldiers and urging people to remain outside.

When I returned home to change into pants and boots, my grandfather tried to stop me from leaving. "Come back!" he shouted at me. "Don't do this. This will not take you anywhere." My grandfather survived decades of Iraq's internal battles by refusing to get involved in politics. He knew that what was about to happen could lead to a bad ending.

Overcome with anger, I told myself that I had a choice. By joining the young men, I could show I wanted to live as a free person. A rebellion had begun in Karbala, and I made a conscious decision to be a part of it. As I left the house, I saw groups of men, mostly local Shiites, who had heard of the uprising in Basra and gathered in Karbala to join the rebellion. Many were teenagers, and they carried whatever they could find—sticks, axes, knives, even curtain rods. A few had guns. "God is great!" they shouted. "We swear by God, we will never forget [Imam] Hussein!"

I was the only woman in the street, surrounded by mobs of men. "Who are you?" they asked me. "What are you doing here? This isn't your place." "This is my fight, too," I told them. "I am with you."

With makeshift weapons and our own bodies, we began to confront the Iraqi soldiers who had entered the town in

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recent days yet who were already weakened by weeks of allied bombing, desertions, and the army's withdrawal from Kuwait. The soldiers started firing on the crowd—the first time I had ever seen live shooting. Caught up in the frenzy of noise and excitement, I didn't run for cover. Instead, I kept shouting along with the others, "Down with Saddam!" Years of anger within me came pouring out.

Even with its guns, the army was no match for us that day. The angry crowds surged toward the soldiers' trucks and jeeps despite the rain of bullets. They swarmed en masse all over the military's vehicles and forced the troops out of their cars so that the soldiers could not possibly shoot at all the waves of rebels. Many soldiers threw down their weapons and ran off down the street, chased by the crowd. Many were caught and some were beaten; most who were captured were taken to the Imam Hussein shrine, which became a makeshift headquarters for the rebels and a detention center for army troops. I saw one older soldier who escaped the crowds banging on my neighbor's door, crying. He asked to be hidden or at least given some civilian clothes that might save him.

With the army on the run, it became easier for us to get weapons. During the Gulf war, Saddam had stored many of his weapons in places the United States and its allies would never dare bomb: elementary and high schools. Guards who used to work at the schools began emptying the school storage rooms and passing us everything from Kalashnikov rifles to grenade launchers. The guns would be necessary: Though many of the soldiers had run off, I saw that some were still putting up resistance to the rebels, and they were increasingly joined by Baath Party civilian militias and members of the town's secret police. For the Baath members and the secret police, their existence depended on Saddam staying in power, so they holed up inside Karbala's city hall and other municipal buildings and fired into the crowds in the street, maiming and killing as many people as they could. Later that night, many attempted to flee but were killed or captured by the rebels.

By late afternoon on March 5, when the situation had calmed down a little, I returned home. My grandmother had been worried sick about me, but I told her not to worry. "If I live, I want to live in freedom," I said. "Otherwise, why bother?" "But," she argued with me, "none of this is organized!" I responded passionately, "Remember what President Bush said? If we rise up against Saddam, the Americans will help us."

I felt this was an historic moment for the Iraqi people, and I wanted to record it. So I grabbed my family's camcorder and started filming the scene in the streets, where people were dancing and shouting in celebration after many of the troops retreated. Cars honked, people handed out sweets, and women and children hugged and kissed. Walking around with the camcorder, I felt as if I were taping an enormous wedding celebration.

Despite the joy, there were many people who had been killed and injured in the initial rush at the army troops. Wounded rebels, army soldiers, and Baath Party members lay in the streets. I told people to carry two of the injured men back to a mosque my family ran. But my grandfather, who wanted no part of the uprising, had taken the keys so that no one could bring the wounded inside. I went into our house, entered the mosque through a back passage, and opened the building's big blue doors. As they swung open, a crowd of what seemed to be hundreds of people rushed in, many limping because of their wounds. With the few supplies we had, we administered first aid. Some people suffered from severe chest and leg wounds and needed to go to the hospital, but nobody dared to drive in the midst of the persistent shooting.

As night fell and the city grew quiet, a great fear set in—a fear fostered by years of living in Iraq. We wondered who in the mosque was really with us and who was against us. Would someone burst into the mosque and try to kill us? Would someone amongst us turn on the group and inform the Baath Party members and other people allied with Saddam where we were? Most of us were strangers to each other. Some of the people in our group, of course, had worked for the secret police—with so many Iraqis in one room, some would have worked for the security services. I treated one secret policeman, Naji, who was shaking with fright as I touched him. He was convinced we were going to kill him as we tried to wrap his wounds. "Don't be scared," we told him. "We are not like you." Naji had expected us to act just like the Baath police. "May God protect you," he sighed in relief.

That night, I mobilized our family's servants to cook food, help clean up the blood in the mosque, and put out mattresses. I ran into the house, got pillows, and ripped the cotton out of them, which we used to dress the wounds.

All this time, my grandfather stayed in the house. Sometimes he would bang lightly on the mosque door and whisper, "Make them leave. This will be bad for you. Saddam will come back." What he was saying was logical, given Iraq's history, but I didn't want to listen. I was exulting in what I thought was a moment of freedom, and I pretended not to hear him and continued helping the wounded. Eventually he ignored us, and, when things got quieter, I sat with other members of the group in the prayer hall of the mosque while each person told his or her history. Soon we were telling jokes we recalled from the Voice of Free Iraq.

It may not sound dramatic, but talking together openly was a completely new experience for us. For years we had lived in a society of informers, where nobody could be trusted. Now, we were getting to know each other for the first time.

That first night of the uprising was the first time I ever saw Iraqis reveal themselves to one another and talk openly about who we were and what had happened to us and our families. Our neighbor, Said, a former army general, told us he had been jailed for ten years for refusing to join the Baath Party while he was in the military. I was shocked to find out he'd been in prison; I had always thought of him merely as our strange, aloof neighbor. Two of the injured men, Sami and Hazam, recounted their experiences. Years before, Sami had been jailed for no reason and had spent four years in prison. He described how prison guards had beaten him, tied

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him to a ceiling fan, and then turned it on. Hazam had also been imprisoned. He later joined the army to get out of prison but deserted when the military invaded Kuwait. Now he was hiding in Karbala.

That night, we also discussed some of our hopes and visions for the future of Iraq. A medical student named Ali, who had come to the mosque and volunteered to treat the wounded, joked, "When we capture Saddam, we'll charge five dollars to everyone who wants to spit on him." We all started laughing because previously nobody had ever dared to make jokes like this. Ali continued, "If someone wants to kick him, ten dollars. That's how we'll raise the money to rebuild Iraq."

We were sure it was only a matter of time before the Americans arrived, and we were already thinking about how to build a democratic society. We talked about all the people who had been thrown out of the country over the last four decades—Jews and Shiites. Many of these people had lived in Iraq for generations, but their property was confiscated when they were forced to leave. Some, of course, never even got the chance to leave—they were executed in Iraq. We spoke quietly so the injured could sleep.

In the morning, on March 6, we sent two men to get medicine from a nearby pharmacy and others to look for any ambulances that were still operating. Ali's sister was a pharmacist, and some men from our group smashed open her store, which had been boarded up as the uprising began, to obtain medical supplies. When they returned to the mosque, we were able to begin seriously treating the wounded and taking them to the hospital.

Despite our excitement, we could not forget our worries about the night before. While people were taking the wounded to the hospital, I made sure we cleaned up everything in the mosque. I told our family's servants, "I don't want there to be any trace of blood or any evidence that people were here overnight." After we scrubbed the floors, we gathered all of our makeshift bandages and burned them in our family's oven.

Later that morning, I walked over to the city jail. The front door was open, and most of the guards had fled, leaving the prisoners alone. At first, the remaining guards wouldn't let me in because I was a woman, but, when I insisted, they backed down. I explored the jail for over an hour. It was a huge building with many floors. People were wandering through the halls, and inmates were banging on the walls of their cells, yelling to be let out. There were prisoners from many countries—Kuwaitis, Saudis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians, and even a few Europeans who had been arrested during the invasion of Kuwait and shipped to Karbala. Although there were still a few cowed guards around, everyone was being freed by members of the uprising who had come to the jail over the past day. One man, a Kuwaiti, told me he had come to Iraq to check on his brother, a prisoner of war from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. He was arrested and held for three months; prison guards tortured him every day. "Get out of the city," I told him. "It's not safe." I pointed him in the direction of the U.S.-held zone in southern Iraq.

Some of the older prisoners didn't even know what year it was. Some prisoners no longer remembered why they were imprisoned in the first place.

As I wandered around the jail, some of the liberated prisoners gave us a tour. I saw huge meat grinders that fed into a septic tank and rooms I believe were used for sexual abuse. Instruction manuals on how to use torture devices were posted on the wall. A terrible smell was everywhere. Here before me was the dark secret of Saddam's Iraq. I felt sick but free. Now, I thought, these rooms will never be used again.

Walking out into the street, I saw that people were still celebrating, but they were also waiting for U.S. support, support needed to prevent the army from returning and to allow the uprising to move to other cities in the heart of Iraq. People became anxious, not knowing what to expect. The strange reality of the uprising, with its hope and joy, its danger and uncertainty, unleashed a mix of emotions. Many of the rebels were eager to destroy the people who had terrorized us for years, and they tried to kill as many soldiers and government agents as possible. There were revenge killings in which families murdered the secret-police agents who had killed their relatives. When I visited the hospital on the second day of the uprising to give blood, I saw the corpse of Jabbar, a well-known local informer, lying in the hospital's courtyard. A local man wanted to use his car to run over Jabbar's dead body.

Other rebels showed mercy, protecting some government workers and helping them hide from angry mobs. It seemed to me that some of the uprising fighters tried not to imitate the ways of our oppressors. Instead of using the police station as their base, they used the two shrines. Instead of summarily executing all of Saddam's soldiers, informers, and secret agents in town, they arrested some—though they also killed many. I saw people cooking in the streets and giving out food to strangers. I had never seen Iraqis standing together like this, but then I had never seen Iraqis experience any semblance of freedom.

As the conflict in Karbala wore on, our fear intensified. By the third day of the uprising, it was only a matter of time, we thought, before Saddam's troops arrived en masse to destroy us. Where were the Americans who had promised to come to our aid? Depression began to set in. We waited and waited—for the Americans, for international help, for food, for water, and for medical supplies. The hours grew longer and longer.

By the fifth day, March 9, regiments of the Iraqi army loyal to Saddam arrived on the outskirts of Karbala and started bombing the city from a distance. Under cover of artillery fire, they began sending deployments of soldiers into the city. When I returned home, I saw two soldiers trying to shoot my neighbor, Said. I yelled at him to be careful as shots hit his hand. One of the soldiers shot at me, and the bullet grazed my cheek. At first I didn't even notice it. But Said called out

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to me, "My daughter, something is coming out of your face." I touched my hand to my cheek and felt blood.

Around 4:30 in the afternoon, tanks from the Republican Guard, Saddam's most devoted troops, started rumbling down Karbala's main street. A group of us gathered outside as Said, the former general, assigned positions to the men. "I don't want to hear a single shot until all the tanks are in," he told us. "Tanks are good in deserts and open spaces, but they're terrible in the streets. Don't attack until all the tanks are trapped." Said had been in the army when it still had a strong British influence.

Said asked for volunteers to bomb one of the tanks. "Who will stay with me?" he asked. I stepped forward, but he was skeptical. "You've been shot and you're a woman," he told me. "But you need me here now, and you don't have anyone else," I replied. He reluctantly agreed to let me try.

I went up to the roof above the tank I was assigned to bomb. I watched as the other fighters down the street ambushed the tanks, one by one. Suddenly it was my turn. I pulled the pin and threw the grenade. The grenade hit its target. There were fires and explosions everywhere. There was a jolt through my body. For three hours I couldn't move and stayed hidden behind the wall; I just sat there praying. What had become of me? A 20-year-old woman, desperate for a future that was now slipping away, tossing grenades and vainly trying to hold off the tragedy that I realized was about to come.

By now, it was clear the Americans were not coming. President Bush had promised to help us if we rose up against Saddam, and we had believed him. But the help never arrived. American troops did not interfere as Saddam turned his helicopters and tanks against us, sending more and more regiments of his troops to Karbala. With no commerce and no help from the world, our supplies were running out, our energy was gone, and our momentum had disappeared. Troops loyal to Saddam began swarming through the city as the residents of Karbala fled. Within a few days, the uprising was crushed. Now it was about our own survival. We said goodbye, cried, and spread out on our own.

Saddam assigned the responsibility for Karbala to his son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, who quickly made an example of the resistance fighters, having troops shoot on sight anyone accused of being in the resistance. Kamel also let the bodies of those rebels shot during the uprising lie untouched in the streets as a reminder to the populace of what happened to people who rose up. I saw stray dogs approach the bodies and start eating them.

To escape Karbala, 20 family members, friends, and I crammed into a car built for five. The son of an army general, who was a close friend, drove us out of Karbala through a hail of bullets. At checkpoints just outside the city, guards screamed at us, but, when the driver showed his army credentials, we passed through.

The next few months were difficult, as the secret police hunted uprising fighters across the country. People told me that they entered our home in Karbala and took everything. Friends in Karbala told me that secret police rounded up people regardless of whether they had fought in the uprising. One family friend returned home to his family in Karbala months later. The next day, the secret police took him to prison. Someone had told them he participated in the uprising, and he was tortured for 45 days, each day denying their accusations. One day a taxi driver knocked on the family's door. "Pull your son out of my car," the driver said, "because he can't move." In prison, the family friend had lost his mind. He stayed curled up, friends told me, crying like a baby and yelling, "I want my mommy!"

We could hardly get beyond Karbala's outskirts, so I hid in a small home outside the city, covering my face and sleeping in a secret room. All my hopes and dreams had seemed so close, but now they were crushed. The spirit had been sucked out of me, but, to keep from getting depressed while I hid, I spent hours writing poetry, waiting for the opportunity to escape. I kept thinking about the bizarre window of freedom I had just experienced: Iraq without Saddam's rule, the joy of liberation, the anger of many people after two decades of repression, the way in which we spontaneously organized, the feeling of being open with neighbors and complete strangers, the sight of the prisoners and the human meat grinders.

Eventually, the border to Jordan was reopened, and I seized the chance to flee Iraq. At the border, I had to bribe the border guard to ignore my name on a list of people who were not allowed to leave the country. I was out, but I felt dead inside.

THE SURVIVING VETERANS of the uprising scattered across Iraq and around the world. Sometimes I hear from a fellow refugee in California or Michigan who also participated in the uprising. But mostly there is silence. We thought if we forgot about the past—or at least stopped talking about it—it would go away. But now the weapons-inspection crisis has reached a boil. Could it possibly be that President George W. Bush will bring justice and liberation where his father failed?

America's showdown with Saddam has evoked all the emotions from March 1991 that I have tried so long to forget. They remind me of the diary I kept during the uprising. I made a point of writing in it every day because I believed we were making history. I wanted to preserve those moments so that I would never forget the first precious days of freedom. I wrote every day at noon, if I could, or at night, by candlelight. After the uprising failed, when I was on the run and cut off from my family, this diary was all that I had.

The night before I left Iraq, I burned my diary in an oven, page by page. Anyone caught with such a document would be killed. In all, I burned over 200 pages—full of details about what I had seen and done in Karbala. As the pages went up in flames, tears streamed down my face.

For many years, I have tried to forget what I wrote in those pages. But I can never erase those memories. Sometimes I feel I am back in Karbala. We are waiting for the Americans once again. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Political Corruptions

COSTA-GAVRAS, GREEK-BORN and French-nurtured, has spent most of his long career making troublesome films. His chief drive has been political, in the sense of addressing social injustice in various parts of the globe, so his films often have annoyed those who like things the way they are. A little-noted struggle of the last forty years is that, though it couldn't have been easy, Costa-Gavras has managed to get financing—and good actors—for films of limited audience appeal. Sometimes he has even had offers from others to take on barbed subjects. But unsurprisingly, his personally engendered films, such as *Z* (about a Greek assassination) and *The Confession* (about the Prague show trials in 1952), have been better than those originated by others, such as *Missing* (about an American father searching for his son in Chile) or *Mad City* (about American TV exploitation of crime).

Now comes something of an exception. Costa-Gavras's subject this time is the behavior of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. Presumably he chose the subject himself—it is hard to imagine a producer searching for a director to take it on—yet it lacks the compact, targeted feeling of his best films. This is a pity because it arrives, apparently by coincidence, at a heated moment. I doubt that when Costa-Gavras began **Amen** (Kino), he knew that the American scholar Daniel Jonah Goldhagen was working on *A Moral Reckoning*, the currently debated study of the matter, part of which originally appeared in these pages.

The source of the film's screenplay, written by the director and Jean-Claude Grumberg, was Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. How wry it is to think that most readers who see that title will not recognize it. When the play was produced on Broadway in 1964, after productions in many European cities following its Berlin premiere under Erwin Piscator, it caused—as it had everywhere else—a giant uproar of protest and defense. Francis Cardinal Spelman, the New York prelate, attacked the play; Catholic laymen urged Mayor Robert Wagner to ban it; defenders flourished praise from Albert Schweitzer, Albert Camus, and (most impressive to me) Pastor Martin Niemöller, who had so courageously defied the Nazis.

The Broadway theater was picketed, but the play was not banned and was soon published. We saw then that the produced version was only about one-fourth of what Hochhuth had written, not abridged for any reason except running time. (The full text would have taken many hours.) The book, too, was widely debated in the press and on television. I was on a television panel with Hochhuth and others and had the uncomfortable job of saying that, though I was glad the play had been written, I wished it had been written better.

But *The Deputy* had moments of tension and heartbreak, and unfortunately the screenplay dilutes them, as it dilutes the thrust of the story. Two characters dominate. One of them is factual: Kurt Gerstein, a chemist who is a German SS officer in 1938, has been helping to supply Zyklon B to the army; when he finds out how it is being used, he tries to take some action to halt the procedure. Hochhuth created the character of Father Riccardo Fontana, a young Italian Jesuit who also learns of the slaughter. (Several actual courageous clergymen were bases for the role.) Through family connections, Father Riccardo is close to the Vatican, and he appeals personally to the pope to protect the Jews. He is given the now-familiar answers (among them that interference might increase cruelties to Jews and might instigate cruelties to Catholics). Ultimately, Father Riccardo pins a yellow star on his cassock and climbs into a freight car full of Jews that is headed for a death camp.

The screen version expands the Gerstein story, making it wander, and it brings in Father Riccardo too late. Much of the film is taken up with Gerstein's personal relations, his family and friends, and with predictable Nazi-officer scenes, including the German captain who knows the war will be lost but insists on playing out his role. Father Riccardo, too, is put through scenes that add little to the drama. His last moment, when he chooses not to be rescued, was not as strong in the play as it might have been, but here it falls absolutely flat.

Further reasons for the film's remoteness is that Mathieu Kassovitz is feeble as the priest and Ulrich Tukur is flavorless as Gerstein. Unhelpful, too, is Costa-Gavras's facile direction. He leans on patterns: frequently he inserts shots of freight trains on the horizon going toward the camps or going the other way empty, which reduce grimness to a cinematic device. He italicizes heavily: at a luncheon party on a sunlit Roman terrace, diplomats and three prelates suck lobster bits while Holocaust topics are shunted aside. Costa-Gavras continually uses close shots of two people, thus converting his film into the talking-heads mode of television. And he has commissioned a score by Armand Amar that pathetically tries to supply the drama that is missing on the screen. The subtlest directing touch is that Costa-Gavras never shows the interiors of gas chambers: he lets observers' reactions do that miserable work. But the picture as a whole lacks the energy and incisiveness—the sheer anger—that have marked Costa-Gavras's best films. A pity, because it is a true Costa-Gavras subject.

The Quiet American (Miramax) has been re-made. Of Graham Greene's novel Lionel Trilling said that it was "hurt vengeful pride" that led Greene to write this basically caustic book about American foreign operations. Greene certainly had an amused, tolerant sneer about America in his brain a good deal of the time (though, despite living in London around the corner from Jermyn Street, he ordered his shirts from Brooks Brothers in New York). I would add to the Trilling comment that this novel about Vietnam during the French war in the early 1950s shares a Hemingway hallmark: travel snobbism. Place-name-dropping. Both novelists often seem to be saying: "Ah, there, you who are trapped in a Des Moines or Manchester suburb, come with me and I'll show you the inner life of Paris or Saigon, the cafés that the tourist never knows, the knowledgeable way to deal with the locals."

In Greene's novel, a seasoned English newspaperman recounts the story of an American medical worker who seems damp behind the ears but is gradually revealed as a secret agent. The lives of the two men connect through their love of the same Saigonese young woman. I

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didn't see the 1958 film of the book, and I don't remember that it caused much political commotion. But that was before our full-scale Vietnam war and its manifold consequences. The release of this new film has disturbed many people, including government officials, because it deals with American machinations in another country, and of course no such things ever happen.

As is frequently the case when there is public fuss about a film or play, the work itself is not very good. Phillip Noyce's directing is less like Greene's cool candor and more like W. Somerset Maugham's temperate sex in intemperate climates. Almost all the interior shots and the zigzags in narrow streets seem reruns. The only unexpected moment, which I thought would be omitted, is that, as in the novel, the Englishman's mistress prepares an opium pipe for him. The mistress is played by the predictable native beauty who cannot act. Michael Caine as the English newspaperman has not yet recovered the precise technique and sharp inflections that marked his acting until *Noises Off* (1992). The American actor Brendan Fraser, something of an ambulatory blob, is pathetically inept. ■

The difference between criticism and hatred.

Anti-American Studies

By Alan Wolfe

I.

Foraging near the hut that he built with his own hands, cultivating beans whose properties provided him with opportunities for speculation, gazing into the depths of the local pond, Henry David Thoreau seems to epitomize a long-standing American worship of nature. And so he was read by generations of students, whose teachers assigned *Walden* as an illustration of the intensity with which America was seized in the nineteenth century by a transcendental sensibility protesting the intrusion into pastoral harmony of the forces of industrialization and urbanization. Understood this way, Thoreau looks back to Jefferson and forward to John Ford. *Walden* was revered as a text of regret, a lament for a world soon to pass out of existence.

Then Leo Marx came along in 1964 and published *The Machine in the Garden*, which questioned this view of Thoreau and, in so doing, challenged the way Americans had understood themselves. Marx's Thoreau was anything but a pastoralist. He was sometimes ambivalent about the mechanization that he saw around him and sometimes downright enthusiastic. "When I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder," he proclaimed, "shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don't know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it." Mechanization was not a false turn; it was our fate, an "Atropos that never turns aside." Far from symbolizing a withdrawal from the world, Thoreau's decision to leave Concord for the woods re-engaged him with the busy clatter that he had seemingly abandoned. Out there in nature, civilization no longer seemed threatening. Documenting his expenses to the last half-cent and providing a full record of his purposeful energy, Thoreau discovered that the power unleashed by the machine is not that different from the power required to transform the wilderness into a productive garden.

The Futures of American Studies
edited by Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman
(Duke University Press, 619 pp., $24.95)

The New American Studies
by John Carlos Rowe
(University of Minnesota Press, 252 pp., $19.95)

Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism
by David W. Noble
(University of Minnesota Press, 260 pp., $19.95)

For Marx, Thoreau's ambivalence toward nature was nothing less than a leitmotif in American consciousness. Tracing his theme from obscure colonial pamphleteers to twentieth-century classics such as Faulkner's "The Bear," Marx tried to show how American writers—and at least two American painters, George Innes and Charles Sheeler—grappled with the desire to remain pure and uncorrupted while still taking full advantage of what Henry Adams would call "The Dynamo." None of our great artists ever reconciled the contradiction, Marx concluded, because finally the question of what kind of nation we were to become could only be answered politically. Yet this does not mean that they were artistic failures. On the contrary, Marx's extensive analysis of works such as *Moby-Dick* and "Ethan Brand" provided a framework for understanding Ahab's obsession and Brand's self-immolation. The kiln into which Hawthorne's Brand throws himself, like the line used to rein in the white whale, represents what Marx calls "the attempt to know the nature of nature" as well as the inevitable loss of mystery that accompanies our alienation from paradise.

The Machine in the Garden appeared during the golden age of an academic discipline called "American studies." Founded by polymaths such as Vernon K. Parrington, F. O. Matthiesen, Henry Nash Smith, and Perry Miller, who scrupulously followed Emerson's injunction to create an American scholarship, the field came to fruition with its second generation of practitioners. Books such as Leo Marx's, as well as John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom* (1956), Marvin Meyers's *The Jacksonian Persuasion* (1957), Russel Blaine Nye's *The Cultural Life of the New Nation* (1960), Newton Arvin's *Longfellow: His Life and Work* (1963), Ray Allen

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Billington's *The Protestant Crusade* (1964), Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans* (1965), and Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left* (1969), were widely read and discussed. (All of these writers save Meyers and Arvin would serve a term as president of the American Studies Association [ASA], which was founded in 1951.) Their work would be supplemented by numerous writers from allied academic disciplines, or from no academic discipline at all, who contributed to the ways Americans understood themselves during this period, including Richard Hofstadter, Henry Steele Commager, Alfred Kazin, Daniel Bell, David Riesman, and Seymour Martin Lipset. The 1950s and the 1960s were decades of turmoil—McCarthyism, the Cold War, civil rights, the Port Huron Statement—but they were at the same time oddly stable decades in which American thinkers tried to make sense of the society that spawned them.

Looking back, one is struck by the absence of women among these writers. With that significant exception, however, the founders of American studies were a diverse group. Many were Jews whose explorations into American literature and history were a way of coming to terms with the decision taken by their parents and grandparents to move to the new world. One of them, Franklin, was African American, and another, Arvin, was gay and would suffer the indignity of a vice-squad raid on his Northampton home. Far from engaging in what C. Wright Mills would denounce as "the great American celebration," these intellectuals were often dissenters from the trends that they saw around them: Riesman and Marx were critics of nuclear brinkmanship, and others, even those who would become quite antagonistic to the New Left, could not abide Senator McCarthy and never made a sharp shift to the political right. The ambivalence that Leo Marx discovered in our national literature was shared by all these writers who interpreted our culture and contemplated our character: they appreciated America for its invention and energy while deploring the excesses that our way of life produced.

II.

American studies still exists as an academic discipline. If anything, it can be found in far more colleges and universities now than during the 1960s, and it attracts significant numbers of graduate students, and its practitioners publish innumerable books and articles. Yet the third generation and the fourth generation of scholars in the field not only reject the writers who gave life to the discipline, they have also developed a hatred for America so visceral that it makes one wonder why they bother studying America at all.

According to Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman—he of Dartmouth, she of Duke—previous efforts to understand the United States committed two unforgivable sins. One was "spatialization." Marx's generation of scholars claimed that there existed an entity called America, that is, an actual society with borders to which one either did or did not belong, and they further claimed that the land within these borders was somehow "exceptional" from other societies around the world. In so doing, writes Janice Radway, also of Duke, "the early consensus in the field tended to elide the idea of America with the culture of the United States." The "imperial gestures" that these assumptions produce are obvious to her: "they unconsciously erased the fact that other nations, groups, and territories had already staked their own quite distinctive claim to the concept and name American." Each of my three children discovered, usually around fourth grade, that Canada and the societies of Latin America have a legitimate claim to be called American; but Radway delivers the same point as a major idea. (Similarly, Amy Kaplan, the president-elect of the ASA for 2003–2004, has a chapter in the Pease and Wiegman volume in which she "poses the question of how the ideology of separate spheres in antebellum America contributed to creating an American empire by imagining the nation as a home at a time when its geopolitical borders were expanding rapidly through violent confrontations with Indians, Mexicans, and European empires.")

The other sin of the earlier generation was "temporalization." Scholars in American studies divided up the history of their society into periods such that each constituted a progressive advancement over the other. In so doing, they left the impression that the United States no longer required radical reform, let alone revolution, since continued progress in the future was assured. Yet they also did the exact opposite simultaneously, imagining the history of their society as timeless. "In proposing that every moment of historical time constituted the occasion for the potential repetition of the sacred time of the nation's founding," as Pease and Wiegman put it, "the national mythos supplied the means of producing what Benedict Anderson has called the empty homogenous time of the imagined national community."

A body of scholarship produced in this way, in the view of Pease and Wiegman, is bound to be suspect. "American literature and American history tended to homogenize the popular memory that they also produced, and literature and history departments supplied the institutional sites wherein the field of American studies collaborated with the press, the university system, the publishing industry, and other aspects of the cultural apparatus that managed the symbolic field and policed the significance of such value-laden terms as *the nation* and *the people*." Poor Leo Marx. He may have thought of himself as a lover of literature, but it appears that he was really a cop, and a corrupt cop at that.

Pease and Wiegman are actually among the more temperate and jargon-free voices speaking on behalf of what John Carlos Rowe of the University of California, Irvine, calls the "new" American studies. Consider the views of William V. Spanos, founding editor of a publication called *boundary 2*. It is one thing, he writes, to call attention to "America's tenacious historical privileging of the imperial metaphysic perspective as the agent of knowledge production, that perspective, synchronous with the founding of the idea and practices of Europe, which, in perceiving time from after or above its disseminations, enables the spatialization of being and subjugation or accommodation of the differences it disseminates to the identical, self-present, and plenary (global/planetary) whole." But things are worse even than that. For we must also consider "America's obsessive and systematic refinement and fulfillment of the panoptic logic of this old world perspective in an indissolubly related relay of worldly imperial practices, the intrinsic goal of which is not simply the domination of global space but also of thinking itself." From this perspective, writers like Marx were not merely trying to police ideas, they were trying to run them out of town.

For these radical critics of American studies, nobody's revolutionary credentials are good enough. The revolt against the American studies of the immediate postwar period was led by people such as Paul Lauter, who teaches at Trinity College in Connecticut. An unrepentant Marxist, Lauter believes in the class struggle and wants to see professors of American studies join janitors, teaching assistants, and other exploited workers in their confrontations with academic administrators. Yet perhaps because he has a sense of humor—he knows that he sounds "like an opera libretto by Leonid Brezhnev," he writes at one point—Lauter comes in for substantial criticism from fellow members of his

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discipline. John Carlos Rowe finds that, for all his leftism, Lauter is "finally still nationalist," which means insufficiently committed to postcolonial criticism of the United States for its imperial pretensions.

Nor is Lauter truly committed to the task that American studies must adopt in this den of white privilege and capitalist exploitation. "Lauter's program for university reform consists only of a very general set of guidelines," writes Eric Cheyfitz of the University of Pennsylvania in disappointment. Lauter, along with other advocates of class struggle within the university such as Cary Nelson and Michael Bérubé, fails to realize that capitalism has already destroyed the idea of university. Dismissing these advocates of university-based class struggle as possessing "an ideological relationship in which the privileged class, as in the pastoral, dress up in the costumes of the dispossessed and perform a play we call 'multiculturalism,'" Cheyfitz would have American studies join with Frantz Fanon and "move cultural capital out of the closed circuit of the university" and into the hands of the poor and oppressed.

Even those academics who consider themselves indelibly stained by the original sin of the whiteness of their skin—a group I had once considered about as left-wing as it is possible to be—are insufficiently radical for the new American studies. In the view of Noel Ignatiev, one of the founders of "whiteness studies," we have to recognize that "the United States is an Afro-American country," which means that "the adoption of a white identity is the most serious barrier to becoming fully American"; as Ignatiev once put it, "the most subversive act I can imagine is treason to the white race." But now Robyn Wiegman dismisses Ignatiev as just another practitioner of American exceptionalism: his mistake is that he "displaces the historical white subject as the national citizen-subject for a narrative of national origins cast now as black." So long as you believe in the existence of the United States, even if your belief envisions a society in which the descendants of slaves become masters of national identity, you are contributing to the creating of a "re-signified nation," which is nearly as bad, it would seem, as the pre-signified nation that already exists.

Take this kind of thing far enough and before long you develop the mentality of the purge, the humorless, relentless quest to check the bona fides of everyone and in so doing to trust the bona fides of no one. William Spanos sums up this spirit by detecting counter-revolution not only in the scholars of Leo Marx's generation, but

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also among the New Leftists who followed them. The scholars of the new American studies may seem radical, he writes, but their work "remains vestigially inscribed by the ideology of American exceptionalism even as it criticizes it and tries to transcend its confining parameters." I have never known anyone to use the term "vestigially" in such a context who was not at heart a sectarian.

Oddly, though, Spanos has a point. Enthusiasts for the new American studies have clearly been influenced by the multiculturalism and the identity politics that have marked American society since the 1960s. When they sought a home in academia, as radical political movements always do, multicultural activists realized that all you had to do was add your ethnic and racial identity to the word "American" and you had created a new academic field. In this way, proponents of Asian American studies or Native American studies or any of the other myriad programs now found in higher education, including even "whiteness studies," by giving the term "American" equal billing with the name of the group seeking recognition, paid homage to their society, as well as to its capacity to assimilate many different kinds of experience. And this, in its way, is a tribute to America. It is the tribute that the America-hating Spanos eagerly sniffs out.

Still, once the intellectual energy passes to these "subaltern" movements, as all of these writers hope will happen soon, the question remains of what should happen to the original American studies out of which they grew. For Pease and Wiegman, American studies, owing to its neocolonial drive to obliterate all potentially competing ethnic and racial cultures, has little choice but to suppress the insurgencies led by women, gays, and people of color. "American studies became the Other against which cutting edge scholarship was to be defined," they write, "and national identity movements and anti-imperial discourses became the Other the field excluded to effect coherence." While the first half of the comment is true—nobody doubts that adherents to the new identity politics scorned the generations that preceded them—the second half of it is way off the mark. The academic discipline called American studies, at most colleges and universities in the United States, has enthusiastically welcomed identity politics into its ranks, to put it mildly.

In contrast to the era that spawned Leo Marx and his colleagues, the ASA now routinely elects women and members of racial minorities to its presidency. Of the fourteen presidents chosen since 1990, ten have been women, and of the four men, one is Latino and one Asian American. (The only two white males elected during this period were Paul Lauter and Michael Frisch.) To talk about the exclusion of minority voices and dissenting voices from the discipline, Pease and Wiegman must ignore the contents of their own book: the chapter by Janice Radway stems from her presidential address to the ASA, and in her musings she builds on the analysis of her predecessor, Mary Helen Washington.

Among those presidents, certainly, can be found individuals who love their country for its inventiveness and its diversity, and in turn love American studies for its innovative character. In her presidential address to the ASA in 1996, Patricia Nelson Limerick took great joy in the free-form nature of her discipline. "Thank heavens, then," she enthused, "for American studies: the place of refuge for those who cannot find a home in the more conventional neighborhood, the sanctuary of displaced hearts and minds, the place where no one is fully at ease. And here is the glory of the ASA: since no one feels fully at ease, no one has the right or the power to make anyone else feel less at ease.... The joy of American studies is precisely in its lack of firm limits and borders." But no such pride in anything associated with America is permitted among the contributors to the Pease and Wiegman volume. Russ Castronovo of the University of Miami accuses Limerick of offering "an entrenched narrative of national administration." Her crime, it seems, is to present a point of view that "hinges on a rhetoric of interpellation that accepts the nation as the ultimate collective arena for citizenship."

If we discard the idea of an American nation, as Castronovo and other contributors to this volume want us to do, there certainly cannot be any such thing as American studies. "In order to promote work that would further re-conceptualize the American as always relationally defined and therefore as intricately dependent on 'others' that are used both materially and conceptually to mark its boundaries," Radway asks, "would it make sense to think about renaming the association as an institution devoted to a different form of knowledge production, to alternative epistemologies, to the investigation of a different object?" This, it turns out, is not a simple question to answer, for once she starts finding imperialism in one place, Radway sees it everywhere. We in the United States, after all, expropriated the name America from the Latin Americans, but they, or at least their elites, were Europeans who aimed "to name geographically dispersed lands that they themselves had imperially expropriated for their own use from indigenous peoples who named the locales they occupied in their own, diverse, and distinct languages." Radway is dissatisfied with all proposed names for the field: even "inter-American studies," which suggests equality between all the components of what is now called the Americas, strikes her as insufficient because it leaves out Singapore and India. "What is to be done?" she asks, echoing you know who. The answer is: not all that much. Having twisted herself into corners from which she cannot escape, Radway concludes rather lamely that we might as well leave the term "American studies" in place and urge everyone to learn more languages.

Retaining the name "American studies" does not mean keeping the approach that long made it distinctive. If we keep it, we must tame it. For one thing, American studies can take a secondary role to those who study America's constituent groups. The field, writes John Carlos Rowe, cannot be allowed "to compete in adversarial ways with other disciplines and methods that complement our own work," and he provides a list of more than twenty such disciplines ranging from women's studies and folklore to Dutch and Korean. It also might be permissible to use the term, Rowe continues, if we modify it slightly by calling it "U.S. studies" or "North American studies," so long as we include Canada in the latter. And we cannot allow American studies to find themes in our literature and culture that tell us who we are, as previous scholars had hoped; its more proper role, Radway instructs, is "to complicate and fracture the very idea of an American nation, culture, and subject."

The difficulty that these writers experience in naming their field stems from the difficulty they have in naming anything. There is a finality about naming; once a phenomenon has been named, it takes on a form that distinguishes it from other phenomena whose names are different. But this relatively simple act of finalization is alien to many of the practitioners of the new American studies. For all their political dogmatism, they are reluctant to be pinned down on whether terms such as nation, culture, literature, citizenship, and gender have specific meanings.

A particularly sad example of this refusal to put boundaries around concepts is provided by José Esteban Muñoz's essay in the Pease and Wiegman book—and the term in question is one that ought to be crucial to anyone who identifies with the political left. The term is "exploitation."

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Muñoz is describing a gay bar in Jackson Heights, Queens called the Magic Touch. (How American studies moved from reading Hawthorne to venturing into gay Queens is another good story.) During the show, judges, chosen randomly, pick out the most attractive dancers, who have stripped down to their G-strings. Money, in the form of tips, is thrown around as mostly older men buy the sexual favors of mostly younger dancers. This kind of prostitution has the whiff of oppression, and Muñoz quotes an anthropologist friend of his to the effect that it is. But Muñoz himself will make no such firm declaration. "From another perspective," he writes,

> we can see this as something else, another formation: this economy of hustler/john is an alternative economy where flesh, pleasure, and money meet under outlaw circumstances. This economy eschews the standardized routines in which heteronormative late capitalism mandates networking relations of sex for money. This economy represents a selling of sex for money that does not conform to the corporate American sex trade on display for us via media advertising culture and older institutions like heterosexual marriage.

Not only does Muñoz resist naming prostitution for the exploitative relationship that it is, he also conflates it with heterosexual marriage, a conceit that allows him to normalize sex trade in a gay bar without perhaps realizing that, in so doing, he acknowledges that conventional marriage is still the gold standard against which all other kinds of sexual relationships must be compared.

Intention substitutes for conclusion when academics are reluctant to define anything definitively. The essays in Pease and Wiegman's book follow a convention widely used in the humanities these days. "I want to call attention," begins one of Radway's paragraphs dealing with the interaction between work in American studies and that found in many subaltern disciplines. "I want to suggest," starts the very next paragraph, claiming that the new work constitutes a fundamental challenge to the old. One after another of the contributors to the Pease and Wiegman volume adopt this way of making their argument; even Muñoz's claims about the normality of prostitution begin this way. This is scholarship as trial balloon: the writer who adopts this convention signals to the reader that what is about to follow is a highly contentious point that lacks sufficient documentation to be proved. To "call attention" and to "suggest" is not to establish or to demonstrate. Postmodernism

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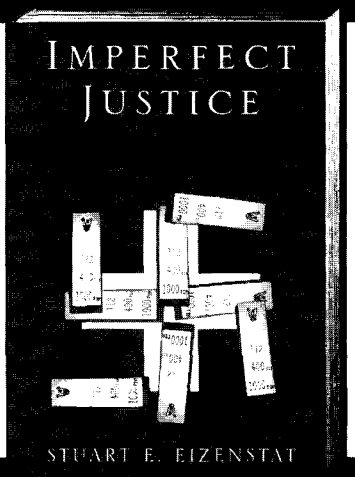

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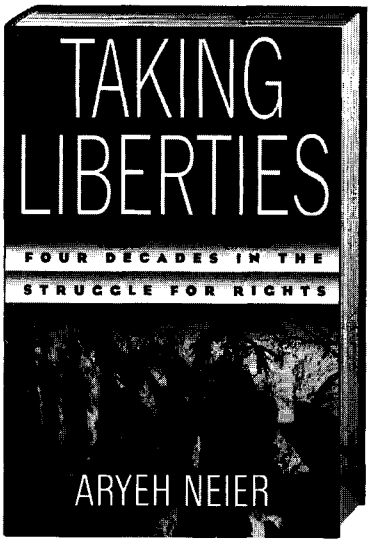

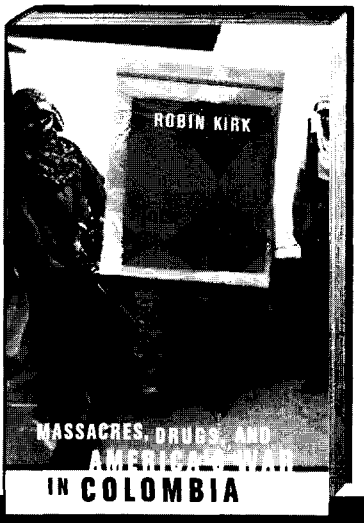

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influences the new American studies as much as identity politics, and postmodernism encourages a lazy, catch-as-catch-can approach to the study of whatever it touches, as if studying something means acknowledging that a real world does exist that can be studied—a lethal concession for postmodernism which destroys its controlling fantasy that reality is subordinate to its interpretations.

For this reason, only a few of the contributors to *The Futures of American Studies* actually engage specific texts. One who does is Nancy Bentley of the University of Pennsylvania. Like Muñoz, she does so to make the point that heterosexual marriage is not what it seems, but at least she discusses an actual historical situation—Mormonism—and the literature to which its practice of polygamy gave rise. Filled with the usual trappings of contemporary scholarship in the humanities—"Mormons were refused the status of white people," she writes of a religion that excluded African Americans from its priesthood—she nonetheless introduces her readers to Maria Ward's *The Mormon Wife* (1855) and Mary Hudson's *Esther the Gentile* (1880), popular novels that exposed the exploitation of women subject to plural marriage. To be sure, Bentley does not introduce them for that purpose; her aim is to suggest that if Mormon wives consented to plural marriage, then we ought to question the consent implicit in conventional marriage. Still, hers is one of the few chapters in the Pease and Wiegman volume in which the reader can learn something new.

"As American Studies reconceives its intellectual project as the study of the many different societies of the western hemisphere and of the influences of the different border zones that constitute this large region, such as the Pacific Rim and the African and European Atlantics, it will become a genuinely 'postnationalist' discipline whose comparativist methods will overlap and thus benefit from the work of other comparativists." So writes John Carlos Rowe. Once upon a time, American studies existed to re-discover a literature and a culture capable of rivaling Europe in the power of its artistic imagination. For the writers of Leo Marx's generation, this discovery liberated intellectuals from the Babbittry of those politicians and journalists who claimed that the greatness of America lay solely in its capacity to produce consumer goods. Now, we are told, the answer to the question of what makes America great is that nothing makes it great.

The reason that America is not great is that America, strictly speaking, does not exist. Revealing America as non-existent is supposed to ease the task of those oppressed groups that are struggling to overcome its hegemony. It does not occur to these revolutionaries that the groups they hope will conquer America cannot do so if there is no America to conquer. Let the nation die, and all who aspire to its perfection die with it.

III.

Death of a Nation is in fact the title of David W. Noble's contribution to the future of American studies, and Noble is in many ways the most appropriate person to write it. Born in 1925 on a farm near Princeton, Noble experienced the fall of his family into poverty during the Great Depression, only to have his life turn around after he joined the Army in 1943. After serving in Europe, he returned home to enter Princeton as an undergraduate and went on to Wisconsin for his doctorate, where his fellow graduate students included the future historians William Appleman Williams and John Higham. (Noble's first published article, which had originated as an undergraduate paper, was called "*The New Republic* and the Idea of Progress, 1914–1920," a subject that was suggested to him by the Princeton historian Eric Goldman.) A precocious scholar, he joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota in 1952 and has been teaching there ever since.

In his early years at Minnesota, Noble was a colleague of Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx, men who, in his view, "discovered a nostalgic, even elegiac scholarship committed to preserving the memory of the period 1830–1850, when, for them, there had existed briefly an autonomous and natural, national culture." (In fact, *The Machine in the Garden* devoted considerable space to *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that appeared a long time after the Missouri Compromise.) Unlike them, Noble "could not write elegies for Emerson and his generation of male Anglo-American artists and intellectuals." Marx's panoply of great writers created no timeless art, Nobel insists; their greatness, such as it was, lay only in the fact that they gave expression to what he repeatedly calls "bourgeois nationalism." Marx and Smith, searching for an America that does not exist, "did not try to evoke the ugliness, the corruption, the falsity of capitalism." Noble would have nothing to do with writers who "emphasized the beauty, the goodness, and the truth of the national landscape." America was not some virgin territory filled with innocence, he came to believe. It was an imagined community, an artifact, that came into existence only by destroying truly innocent people like the Native American tribes. "These doubts," Noble writes, "later caused me to distance myself from my colleagues in American studies at the University of Minnesota."

Noble did not distance himself from Minnesota's American studies program for long. More radical graduate students began to show up at the university, and, like Noble, they were unwilling "to worship at Emerson's tomb." Noble claims to have witnessed the "sadness" and the "pain" of Smith and Marx as students spurned them and their ideas, but he shows few regrets of his own, noting with cold dispassion that Smith "took a position elsewhere, where he would not have such an intense relationship with graduate students," and commenting with barely hidden academic snobbery that Marx "left to teach undergraduates at Amherst." Noble makes clear that Smith and Marx were simply out of touch with the newly emerging scholarship: they "did not want to think about what the relationship of American studies would be to the new world of 1946, when one could no longer imagine an isolated national culture."

Nobody could accuse Noble of being out of touch. He is a generation-skipper, not an uncommon phenomenon in academia. Although trained in the classic version of American studies that inspired so much of the "exceptionalist" literature, he broke with his contemporaries to join the new radicalism that was emerging in the field. His book blessedly lacks the heavy-handed jargon with which younger scholars have afflicted the field (although it shares with them their inane forms of leftist politics). And Noble can occasionally be interesting: he alone, of all these writers, seems to have a taste for music and acknowledges the existence of figures such as Edward MacDowell and Charles Ives, if only to accuse them of their dependency on a European musical tradition. (The gay composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes and the African American William Grant were just as dependent on European musical forms, identity politics or not, but Noble never mentions them.) Still, Noble adds little to what younger colleagues say in such anthologies as *The Futures of American Studies*. His book is noteworthy not for what it says—it is rambling and repetitive—but for what it reveals about a man ferociously eager to join the chorus of denunciation, even if those being denounced are people very much like himself.

Noble heaps scorn upon white male Protestants whenever he comes upon

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them. To his mind, the one thing that Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, Whitman, Twain, Henry James, and Faulkner have in common is their ethnicity. (Terms such as "Protestant," "Catholic," and "Jewish" never refer to religious faith in his usage, only to national origins.) How odd it seems to Noble, therefore, that so many of the literary critics and the historians who called attention to their genius were Jewish. What gives? Well, white male Jews had at least two reasons for wanting to preserve and protect a Protestant literary canon. The more innocent explanation, says Noble, is that doing so would help them to overcome their disappointment with Marxism, although there is nothing particularly Jewish in that. The more sinister—if not downright ugly—explanation is that worshipping at the altar of Protestant creativity would enable Jewish scholars to "mask the revolutionary changes in national identity taking place in the 1940s."

That shift in identity, in Noble's view, was caused by the fact that America during that decade was changing from "Anglo-Protestant" to "pluralist." Jumping around from decade to decade, as he frequently does, Noble points out that "beginning in the 1950s, Congress began to lift restrictions on Chinese immigration. The Immigration Act of 1964 made it possible for people of color to become citizens, and the country began to experience large-scale immigration from Asia and Latin America." But "many male Jews, the first group of unclear outsiders (after the south male Anglo-Protestant New Critics) to become part of the academic establishment," wanted only to "obscure" the new pluralistic America coming into being. That is why so many of them "became the leaders of the consensus school of historical interpretation that was challenging the conflict school of the 1930s." Citing Lionel Trilling, Richard Hofstadter (who was half-Jewish on his father's side), Daniel Boorstin, Daniel Bell, and Louis Hartz, he writes that "these men wanted to believe that the tradition of nationalism in the United States did not share a commitment to racial exclusiveness with Nazi Germany." Noble's coterie of white male Jewish writers had a choice: they could join with the project of bourgeois nationalism and win acceptance by their social superiors, or they could reject it in favor of the insurgencies led by people of color. Their tragedy is that they opted for the former.

Everything about this explanation is wrong. The Immigration Act was passed in 1965, not in 1964. Before its passage, all kinds of people of color had become citizens, including African Americans and Asian Americans. The 1965 act did not target immigrants from any one place; it abolished national quotas, emphasized skills, and encouraged the re-unification of families. But the most serious problem with Noble's speculation is not that he gets his facts wrong; it is that his thoroughly reductionist sociology of knowledge insults the motives of all those Jewish scholars of America who not only had perfectly good reasons to admire the United States, but who also welcomed the new pluralistic America that was coming into being.

Notice Noble's formulation of the comparison with Nazi Germany. He does not say that the United States in fact refrained from exterminating its non-Protestants, nor does he add that American lives were sacrificed to end the Nazi slaughter, both points reason enough for American Jews to love their country. All he says is that these Jewish scholars simply wanted to believe that America was better than Nazi Germany, as if it were an open question as to whether it was. At the same time, Noble's reading of what Jewish scholars of America had to say about pluralism in the 1940s and the 1950s is the exact opposite of the truth. The consensus that so-called consensus historians defended was not a vision of Protestant America, it was a vision of the melting pot. Jewish scholars such as Arnold Rose and Milton

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Gordon were in the forefront of defining, and defending, this new American pluralism. (Rose, as Noble well ought to know, also taught at Minnesota, worked on Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, shared the liberal anti-communism of his state's increasingly prominent politicians such as Hubert Humphrey, and, with his wife, published *America Divided: Minority Group Relations in the United States* in 1948.) Where Noble sees only the "power used by a dominant male Anglo-Protestant culture to protect its cultural virginity against the agency of all the groups in the United States who were imagined as outside the fraternity of citizens in the 1830s," the Jewish scholars attracted to the study of America saw a society and a literature too filled with paradox and promise to be so single-minded in its determination.

There was a kind of anti-Semitism around Princeton in the years when Noble grew up that worked assiduously to keep Jews out of day schools, country clubs, and the university itself. Noble would have nothing to do with it. He chose to work with Princeton's first Jewish professor, and a good part of the Protestant exclusivity that he rejects stems from its hostility toward Jews and Catholics. Still, Noble is clearly made uncomfortable by the Jewish love for America's Emersonian high culture. His detour into ethnic motivations for scholarship leaves a bad taste. How could these Jewish scholars not join him in his disgust with America, he is implicitly asking? Shouldn't they have known better? Shouldn't they have known what he, who shares "the racial heritage of North European Protestants," knows all too well, which is that the American dream is a nightmare of spoilage and exploitation?

Right-wing anti-Semites often attack Jews for failing to appreciate America. Is it all that different to single them out for loving it? Fortunately for Noble, Jews were not America's only minority group. In contrast to the exclusionary patriotism of the earlier generations of WASPs, Noble would "celebrate ... the agency of those who were previously seen as un-American." The scholars who speak on behalf of women, African Americans, Native Americans, or Asian Americans—or so Noble believes—do not have the Jewish hang-up about America. (Many of the new Americanists whom he celebrates are in fact Jewish, but they are women and therefore acceptable to him.) Here, among the crowd that makes up the anthology assembled by Pease and Wiegman, Noble feels at home. With them he can finally shed himself of his white male identity. The dream of his lifetime is being realized. The nation that he cannot abide is expiring, and he has lived long enough to provide its epitaph.

Lion and Lamb

The fickleness of March; first black and white,
and then the sour brewing smell of spring

worried at the chariot of cloud.
How could I be asleep all afternoon?

Mythical dreaming bonelessly explained.
Without my noticing, love changed its shape.

Whatever metamorphosed was another
shape of absence peering in the mirror.

I never really missed you. You were gone,
wandering, hands in pockets, toward the river.

But what if you had turned to me in hunger?
I recognised a rag of the familiar.

By the time the buds began to show,
a window opened inward to the dream.

Long days, a lazy regimen, the blue
country nothing pointed to till now.

Rachel Hadas

IV.

Although one would never know it from books like these, old-fashioned American studies is actually doing pretty well in America, even if it is under-represented at the American Studies Association. In theory, of course, it should not matter where good studies of America are done, so long as they are done. But in practice matters are not so simple. Critics of the old American studies are right about one thing: the field was created in the early years of the Cold War, and American foreign policy-makers took an interest in what its practitioners had to say. That international aspect of American studies still exists; programs in Germany, Japan, India, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain are devoted to the study of the United States, and through its Fulbright program and its Study of the U.S. Branch, the State Department sends American scholars abroad and brings foreign scholars to the United States.

For all their attacks on American imperialism, students of the new American studies are actually rather quiet about this side of their discipline, perhaps because of the opportunities for foreign travel it makes available to them. When they go abroad to denounce America to foreign students, these scholars practice a kind of imperialism in reverse, informing young idealists abroad that the America they tend to admire is actually a fiction, and a detestable place. The results can be rather comic. One of the contributors to the Pease and Wiegman book, Dana Heller of Old Dominion University, describes her efforts to offer a Marxist interpretation of *Death of a Salesman* to students at Moscow State University. Fortunately for American diplomacy, her students could have cared less; they were much more impressed by an episode of *The Simpsons* that parodied one of Willy Loman's speeches.

This anecdote suggests that even if America-haters come to speak for America at colleges and universities around the world, students at those institutions will have enough sense to ignore them. But it also raises an interesting question of responsibility. Academics like to pride themselves on the notion that academic freedom means an absence of restraint in the topics that they choose to study and the methods with which they choose to study them. But all freedoms hinge on responsibilities, and people who choose to make the study of America central to their lives cannot avoid the fact that, spatialization or not, their country actually exists, and its actions are of consequence. Now, assuming responsibility hardly means engaging in a mindless celebration of America; the founders of the field never did that, and their books would now be worthless if they had been merely patriotic. Assuming responsibility means possessing both a curiosity about the society that they seek to understand and a capacity to convey both its possibilities and its pitfalls. Neither of those qualities is much in evidence among the bitter rejectionists who have filled the vacuum left by the retirement or the passing of Leo Marx's generation of scholars. It is a credit to our freedom that we have avoided turning American studies over to a propaganda arm of government and that we allow those who appreciate their society so little to speak in its name. If only they themselves could rise above their own propaganda, and muster just a smidgen of gratitude in return. ■

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Men in Tights

By ANNE HOLLANDER

Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear by Paul Fussell

(Houghton Mifflin, 204 pp., $22)

AFTER PUBLISHING FOUR scholarly works about eighteenth-century English literature, Paul Fussell became famous with the publication of *The Great War and Modern Memory* in 1975. Since then he has written several other books with war as the theme, another called *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System*, and even *The Boy Scout's Handbook and Other Observations*. His new book lets us believe that the true reason he left the eighteenth century for the analysis of modern struggles was a passion for the uniforms that they require. This feeling was apparently born in him long before any interest in writing or scholarship. He recounts how the Boy Scouts' uniform made him join the organization when he was small, and how the junior and senior ROTC uniforms roped him in during high school and college and prepared him to wear, at last, the uniform of an officer in the U.S. Army between 1943 and 1947. Fussell notes that his entire youth was spent in uniform, registering his responses to it and its effect on everybody else.

Now we find him brooding on the notable appeal of all uniform clothing. This brief study touches on baseball and football uniforms, school uniforms, bandplayers' and cheerleaders' outfits, church vestments and religious habits, and the regulation gear for chefs, McDonald's workers, hospital staff, bellboys, doormen, railway porters, deliverymen, policemen, the Hasidim, the Amish, the Ku Klux Klan, ice cream vendors, and brides. And, in passing, the regulation teaching gear for professors in universities, as Fussell was for many years following his military period. We soon see, however, that modern military uniforms absorb him most, not just our own but also those of our allies and our enemies during the twentieth century, and some from the preceding century. He still looks with envy at what Marines wear, always so superior to grubby Army brown, although he can appreciate the Navy without envying the blue.

At the very start Fussell asks pardon for what he calls the "unrelenting masculinity of this book," the brides notwithstanding. He takes pains to include remarks about the adaptation of masculine uniforms to female personnel—a tricky matter, sometimes involving special pregnancy arrangements—and he calls this "doing justice" to women; but the section on brides is meager and unsympathetic, without the many remarkable historical anecdotes that pepper the other parts of the book. Fussell mainly sneers at what he calls the "wedding trauma," and at the ridiculous cost not only of acquiring bridal finery in either chaste or sexy versions, but also of preserving it afterwards like a relic in dust-proof, acid-free, airtight containers. Abruptly ending the chapter, he says that selling these "has become a big business, like the divorce industry." Later on, though, we hear how very touching is the careful preservation of beloved old military uniforms.

Fussell attributes the beginning of regulation white for brides to Queen Victoria, although his scholarly self might remember that Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) wore a white wedding dress, "flowered with silver." Richardson made a point of this, because when his humble heroine married her aristocratic boss, bridal white was already a long-standing custom among royalty and nobility, as far back as 1614—but enough. Fussell is not really interested in this subject anyway, certainly not historically. He is interested in nurses and nuns—much more honorable than brides, and much closer to soldiers. He thinks it a loss that the formerly starched uniforms with stiff caps and the full habits with crisp veils have been phased out in contemporary society, but he is attentive to the idea that nuns and nurses now want to look connected to ordinary people instead of set apart from them. But in truth the modern wedding dress is not a uniform at all, it is a costume, and for one appearance in a famous starring role. Fussell—who wants very much to emphasize the distinction between costume and uniform, as if between role-playing and role-filling—should simply have left out the brides.

Fussell points out that a real uniform brings honor, marking a man as one of a powerful retinue serving the duke, the king, the parliament, the president, or God, suiting him for an impersonal and demanding collective effort. A uniform is known to be conferred on its wearer, the visible prize for being worthy to join the company. It asks to be taken seriously, says Fussell, as a costume does not. And indeed he finds that today's personnel who wear uniforms are all proud of them, even in the most subordinate and lowest-paid occupations. Sanitation workers and McDonald's burger-slingers, we are invited to think, are feeling the same sense of ennoblement felt by the Knights Templar or the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

Perhaps they are. And perhaps that is because a quasi-religious flavor, suggesting self-sacrifice and risk-taking—to say nothing of thrillingly licit killing in a provisionally sacred cause—still lingers in any uniform's seams and buttons. Strong stuff, even for FedEx deliverymen. On the other hand, Fussell would see any actual cowboy got up to mimic television or Marlboro-ad cowboys, or any student mimicking a real basketball player or rock singer—or a "garage mechanic, panhandler, tearoom gypsy, or cattle rustler," to borrow Philip Roth's list, here quoted from *The Professor of Desire*—as dressed up in a costume.

The dark suit and necktie, needless to say, Fussell regards as a fashion that became a uniform, conferring similar honor. The academic-professorial tweed jacket and khaki trousers of Fussell's youth he recalls as once having had the same character, now being used as "casual" business uniform. His distinction gets very blurry, though, since both the dark suit and the sport coat with casual pants are essentially forms of costume for voluntary role-playing. The groups wearing them show submission to group fashion, not to a higher authority. It is the kind of effect that gives the word "uniform" its pejorative flavor, associating it with a dishonorable love of safety. High school and college students of both sexes, Fussell says, always feel the power in voluntary uniformity of dress, where all inventive variation looks like error, not freedom—as on parade, or in the monastery.

Fussell thinks girls are "allowed more

ANNE HOLLANDER's latest book is *Fabric of Vision: Dress and Drapery in Painting* (Yale University Press).

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invention" in this, but that is not the right way to put it. Girls' clothes have more variation built into them. This means that girls get stuck with more possible ways of looking wrong, and that produces more constraint, not less. The uniformity of basic male garments is one thing that has made women wish to adopt them, to feel exempt from so many possibly wrong choices.

WHITE TIE AND tails once became an ennobling livery for gentlemen in the evening, but Fussell says he now feels like laughing at a symphony orchestra all wearing it. When the outfit was adopted for orchestras in the nineteenth century, it was fashionably worn by all males in the audience, and it looked as universally satisfying as any fashion at the peak of its run. The run was long for formal male evening dress, lasting well past the middle of the twentieth century; but white tie now reminds people of Adolph Menjou and Marlene Dietrich, and it has unquestionably become a costume, more comic—or let's say ludic—than dramatic in flavor. This may change back, of course, since fashion consists largely of perpetual re-invention.

The dominating masculinity of this book is actually one of its virtues, because Fussell feels free to visit in detail the rarely studied subject of male sartorial vanity. Modern fashion has become so feminine a hazard in everybody's mind that we tend to forget the analogous snares set for the male sex over the centuries. For many men, male groups, and whole nations, we find, it has not been shifts in male fashion—long since considered a diminished subject—but rather the seductive varieties of military finery that have become an obsession, a preoccupation, a fetish.

The masculine erotic appeal of military finery is undeniable. The legendary fact that guys in uniform get girls, perpetuated by Jane Austen, Balzac, and many other writers in epochs when military dress was spectacular, is still borne out in reality, certainly in wartime. You could say that girls have always liked uniforms the way guys have always liked low-necked dresses, at least since around 1300. The allure is very basic, and it does not depend on color, plumes, and gold trimming in either case. Fussell thinks that emphasis on big, strong shoulders helps make a uniform physically attractive—epaulettes, shoulder boards, and strips across the shoulders with insignia attached. It is notable, however, that in mid-eighteenth-century prints showing the many-colored uniforms of Frederick the Great's crack Prussian troops, all the figures have narrow chests and small shoulders with nothing on the uniform to give them any bulk or spread. The *tenue* further emphasizes a dome-shaped belly, wide hips, and short legs.

This same figure appears on young and handsome male civilians in portraits of the period, and it seems to have been the ideal man's body at the time. It was only toward the very end of the eighteenth century that the classical Greek male figure, with long legs and big shoulders and no belly, once more became the model for soldiers and gentlemen, as it had been in the Renaissance (see Charles V and Henry VIII). Around 1780, civilian shoulders were again being augmented by padding, and soon military uniforms were sporting shoulder knots, epaulettes, shoulder boards, fourragères (loops of braid around the top of the arm), and eventually shoulder strips with insignia. Girls back in the early eighteenth century undoubtedly liked the bright and tight Prussian soldiers, even with bellies and without Herculean deltoids. The main thing was tightness, which produces an overall bodily tumescence quite impossible to resist. Full armor was best for that, but by the eighteenth century it was long gone.

Fussell describes the gradual abandonment of flashy and hard-to-wear uniforms for battle, although they once made sense when opposing armies marched or rode to meet one another face-to-face, and each side wished to be visually overwhelming. Dull-colored and easy-fitting uniforms are required for modern war, where to be invisible from any distance is a prime necessity, as well as to shoulder and fire a rifle with speed and to crawl through mud looking like a part of it. Tight, complex, and vivid dress uniforms, some with metallic gorgets or breastplates and plumed headgear, are now worn on parade by prestigious troops of guards in London and other great capitals, by high school marching bands in the United States, and perhaps also by a whole network of people called "re-enactors," though Fussell prefers to call them "weirdos" or maybe "sickos."

For certain groups of these devotees, Third Reich Reproductions, among other companies, sells accurately made and accessorized Nazi uniforms that you can buy on the Internet from WaffenSS.com, so that you can re-enact World War II battles from the other side. Italian Fascist uniforms are also available, and probably Japanese ones, too, all for specific regiments. Other groups prefer re-enacting engagements from World War I, the Civil War, or the Revolutionary War, and perfect replicas of all those well-known trappings are likewise available to those in the grip of what Fussell, with great distaste, calls military romanticism. Playing soldiers is now done by adults who have never been in battle, "indulging fantasies of heroism, mostly on weekends," he remarks. "Missing are the screams of the wounded and the vomiting and crying of those close to them." You can also get fake medals. Fussell goes on to mention uniform porn, which not only involves military gear but nurse and nun outfits and church and police gear. The power of uniforms to bring out cruelty in the wearer, along with their inherent sexual pull, has naturally made them an indispensable part of sadomasochistic equipment. You can rent and buy films that show them in use, or get the goods yourself and go to it.

THE ANCIENT POTENCY of uniforms has seeped into masculine civil consciousness in many forms. The "dullness" often objected to in modern masculine tailoring since its launch in the early nineteenth century, meaning its uniform discretion and reticence, had a gaudy counterpart in the still-dashing military modes at that time. Objections to the dullness of male clothing by Alfred de Musset, later Oscar Wilde, and still later D. H. Lawrence (here quoted by Fussell in praise of parti-colored Renaissance hose) can seem like envy on the part of literary men for military splendor, even though both Wilde and Lawrence said they envied only the vanished days of male color and sexy display in formal civil life. But it seems more than that.

"Colorful tights" is a phrase derived from Lawrence that Fussell himself uses again and again, as a running gag to mean what cannot acceptably be worn by modern men, alas. He and Lawrence, and Wilde, too, really seem to be envying the colorful and sexy creations (sometimes worn with bright tights) that fashion for many generations has been urging women to wear. Beautifully designed and adorned modern uniforms—trim, tight, always ennobling—then become the male answer to female fashion, the necessary counterpart of the low neckline. It is a replacement, *mutatis mutandis*, for all that ancient male civilian display, once accompanied by curled and flowing male hair, vivid and plumed male hats, and shapely male legs, which for a long time thoroughly outshone women's modest garments. Normal female dress in those dark ages somewhat resembled nun's habits, before female fashion began exposing the skin, adorning the hair, and tightening the waist, rivaling and eventually eclipsing the male version.

Fussell also quotes Virginia Woolf in

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Three Guineas, in which she makes the usual mockery of modern female fashion by pointing derisively to the glories—"how many, how splendid, how extremely ornate"—of regulation public finery for English male judges, academics, and clergy, all of which stem from early days of male magnificence: "Now your shoulders are covered with lace, now furred with ermine ... sometimes you wear wigs," and much more in like vein. She finds the most splendid public male costume to be military dress uniform, remarking that "since the red and gold, the brass and the feather are discarded upon active service," their appeal must be entirely to vanity, to flaunt military majesty and "induce young men to become soldiers." Fussell remarks that Lawrence would have agreed, and he certainly does himself. Men who are never soldiers (or sailors or Marines) must resign themselves to missing out on the delicious "colorful tights" effects of dress uniform.

The beauty of the other "uniform," the "dull" suit and tie, was praised enthusiastically in the 1890s by Max Beerbohm, who pointed approvingly to the universally becoming look of smooth and easy-fitting coats and trousers in muted shades and subtly textured fabrics. He noted that democratic ideals were served by this universalizing mode of dress, which looks good on men of every physical type and at all economic levels, flexible enough to suggest individuality and a sense of humor and pleasure, but demanding enough to suggest the effort required to maintain a common level of probity and civility—and peace, of course. Fussell points out that the "lounge suit," as it was once called, encourages sitting down, whereas "the uniform was made to stand up straight in." No genial or reflective attitudes were built into its design, and all common progress meant marching in step and perhaps chanting in unison, not sitting in colloquy exchanging opinions.

FUSSELL NOTES THAT in modern America military dress uniform has itself become muted in color and easy of fit. But the old tradition of stiff and dramatic display died hard elsewhere, and our enemies in World War II still held to it, especially the Italians, who came in for much Allied scorn. Fussell believes that this circumstance confirms "Shakespeare's apparent understanding that the fanciest-dressed army always loses." Homer and Virgil already seem to have believed this, since the Trojans attract Greek scorn for their gaudiness in both the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*.

In his chapter on Germany, Fussell remarks that under the Nazi regime, a rule was inaugurated giving all occupations, not just the military, a "dress uniform." This quasi-military outfit was not something to work in, but something to wear on the street when not working, and at public social gatherings. The Nazi idea, Fussell says, was to create a universal army-like spirit of conformity among civilians, which would prevail in the Reich after all undesirables were obliterated and the war was won. How do we square this, I wonder, with the lurid factoid that Fussell throws out at the beginning of the chapter (no source given) that in Germany "during the 1930s, and doubtless before, the public executioner performed his function, by means of an ax, in full evening dress, wearing white tie and tails, with silk top hat and white gloves." If this is true, it seems to ax white tie and tails as the uniform of civilized man in the evening. And that may have been the whole idea.

The idea of civil dress uniform was not a Nazi invention. Such accoutrements became fairly general in Central Europe during the decades following the Congress of Vienna, where military dandyism reached a dizzy height in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, often including padding and corsetry for ever more sublimely tumescent tightness. Thereafter, nineteenth-century ballrooms in Prague, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna were ablaze with the paramilitary braid, bright stripes, and gleaming buttons and swords worn by civil servants of all degrees, holders of honorary posts, ambassadors, and chancellors, right along with authentic field marshals, admirals, generals, and all degrees of officers. Members of clubs and societies often had quasi-military uniforms for such formal occasions, and in czarist Russia even doctors, lawyers, teachers, and state students of all kinds also had their own soldier-like, ornamented dress uniforms.

Imperial, czarist, and Nazi male elegance seemed to require looking most acutely military when at leisure, as if to suggest that superior men really sought pleasure only in marching, charging, wielding a saber, or standing at attention, and in being admired only for doing those things. In polite society, any dancing, flirting, eating, drinking, or even speaking must appear to be necessary obligations men might unbend to undertake, but just until the next trumpet blast. Late-nineteenth-century France and England did not go in for these effects, now associated with *The Merry Widow* and similar divertissements. The acutely civilian black tailcoat with white waistcoat and neckwear was then making a most dramatic contrast to the elaborate female gowns in the ballrooms of London and Paris, with New York and Chicago following their lead.

One can imagine a Nazi plan to do away with decadent male evening wear at one stroke of the headsman and go back to Prussian braid and buttons for serious male appearance. Fussell indicates how much further Nazi Germany took the comic-opera spirit than the old imperial regimes ever did:

> At work in the mines, miners necessarily wore practical, unsightly clothes, but walking out ... an apprentice miner wore a black, high-collared tunic with rows of silver buttons on sleeves and chest to the number of twenty-four, and on top, a quasi-military visor cap. As you rose in the mining ranks, your black tunic added more silver buttons to a total of thirty-four.... As a graduate miner your headgear was a black shako with a large silver eagle in front and a plume on top. For formal affairs, you added white gloves, a sword, and a red-white-and-black Nazi armband.

Meanwhile, olive drab clothed the British, American, and Russian armies in World War II, and their miners at home had no white gloves and bright swords for evenings out. Throughout the war, in deliberate contrast to all the nifty-looking Nazi troops and the black-clad SS, Goebbels was wearing a double-breasted pinstriped suit; and Hitler, following Napoleon's dramatic style, always wore a plain pale gray coat with a white shirt and black tie, no insignia, adding only the eagle-and-swastika armband. Both he and Napoleon meant to look entirely superior to everyone else, all buttoned to the chin in their exciting tight trappings and laden with bars and badges. Fussell goes on further about the sartorial excesses of Hermann Goering, who sometimes wore a Roman toga and sandals to receive guests, and once received the diplomatic corps while dressed as Wotan and carrying a huge spear.

Fussell details more vain follies in the war dress of other leaders and other nations, reserving approval for the modest and often casual restraint of Generals Montgomery, Eisenhower, and MacArthur—the last once a military dandy, but reformed. American military simplicity generally delights Fussell, especially what he sees as a cool American way of wearing any uniform, of showing a healthy refusal to take a fanatic delight in any form of military decorum—perhaps he believes that only the re-enacting weirdos and the sado-masochists do that. He evokes the photos of the Japanese surrender aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri*, where all the humiliated

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Japanese military are in impeccably stiff dress turnout, their civilian officials in morning coats, striped pants, and top hats, and the triumphant Americans all in wrinkled khaki pants and shirts.

"COMBAT FATIGUES" WERE an American invention—the use in battle of the loose and baggy one-piece suits originally designed for soldiers to wear while repairing engines, peeling potatoes, and cleaning latrines. The term "fatigue" had for centuries meant any non-military work carried out by soldiers, sometimes for punishment, and "fatigues" is short for the debasing garments worn for it—a far cry from real uniform. These demeaning clothes were later embellished with camouflage patterns for use in Vietnam and ever since, and now the world has adopted them for combatants, but Fussell gives an idea of their initial impact. He quotes Victor Klemperer's diary from just after the war's end to the effect that arriving American troops were almost unrecognizable as such: "They are not soldiers in the Prussian sense at all. They do not wear uniforms, but overalls or overall-like combinations of high trousers and blouse all in gray-green. The steel helmet is worn as comfortably as a hat, pushed forward or back, as it suits them."

Fussell then cannot resist quoting Mark Twain: "Huckleberry came and went at his own free will." He likes to think that all Americans naturally take their cue from Huck; but then he has a nasty little chapter exposing Hemingway as a "semi-weirdo." Hemingway frequently pretended to be a soldier, although he had seen combat only as a correspondent and an ambulance driver, on one occasion removing the correspondent's insignia from the uniform he wore and pretending to "command" a group of local French partisans. Tsk, tsk.

There are many quotations from fiction in this small volume, illustrating the feelings and the attitudes about uniforms that Fussell finds sympathetic, along with quotes from various writers on clothes and various experts with whom he has spoken. His modest enterprise is intended as a meditation, a familiar essay, an old-fashioned literary sort of book expounding the author's crotchets through anecdote, sardonic observation, and mild polemic. There is neither index nor bibliography, and no illustrations—it faintly suggests Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (quoted at the outset), but it is really more like several discursive short works on dress written in the first half of the last century: *The Eternal Masquerade* by H. Dennis Bradley (1923), or Quentin Bell's *On Human Finery* (1947). Fussell ponders the fact that we all want to look the same, but we each want to look entirely individual, as these and other writers have pondered it before him. The subtitle is not really apt for the book—although it is certainly very present-day—except as it applies among uniformed troops, where you are a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force because you are wearing that uniform. If it is a costume, then you are a weirdo. Or maybe Dana Andrews. ■

The Way We Are

By CHARLES LARMORE

Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism by Tzvetan Todorov translated by Carol Cosman

(Princeton University Press, 254 pp., $29.95)

I.

"MAN IS A marvelously vain, diverse, and undulating thing," observed Montaigne at the beginning of his *Essays*. "It is difficult to found on him any constant and uniform judgment." Nothing is more true, and nothing better explains why the idea of humanism is so hard to pin down. It is really more of an outlook than a doctrine. Montaigne was himself among the first to use the term, meaning by "humanists" writers who looked as he did at human existence on its own terms, without appeal to theological teachings. His goal was not to present a substantial theory of man's nature or a comprehensive account of the good life. Montaigne observed that our thinking, if allowed to follow its natural path, is forever in movement, and shares in the endless variability that makes up the human condition as a whole.

Tzvetan Todorov's book on the humanist legacy is written very much in the spirit of Montaigne, with frequent reference to the *Essays* themselves. It offers a wide-ranging meditation on the open-endedness of human life, on the freedom and the sociability that are its only givens, and on the minimal ethic of autonomy and responsibility to others that they ought to inspire. Yet the book is by no means a hymn to man. Todorov harbors no illusions about the mix of good and bad that enters into the fabric of all that is human. He takes his title from Montaigne's remark that the human world is never more than an "imperfect garden."

Born in Bulgaria in 1939, Todorov left his homeland at the age of twenty-four to study in Paris, where he has lived ever since. Upon his arrival he quickly became, during the heyday of Parisian structuralism, one of the foremost theorists of "poetics," analyzing the formal properties of literature (such as the recurrent structures of the folktale). But then there occurred a *crise de conscience,* and Todorov admirably turned his energies to showing how literature deals essentially with the substance of human experience and with all the great questions of human good and human evil. Over the past twenty years he has branched out to publish a series of books on subjects as various as cultural relativism, liberal democracy, and the endurance of the moral life even among prisoners in twentieth-century concentration camps. His new book brings together within a single volume many of these marvelously diverse interests. More as a lover of literature than as a systematic philosopher, Todorov develops his themes by interpreting the works of illustrious French writers of the past. Montaigne, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Constant are the main figures in a French tradition of humanism that he sets out to revive. Yet he speaks throughout in his own voice, with a rare breadth of sympathy and with a fine eye for the complexities of human experience.

Todorov's exclusively French focus is less surprising than his decision not to discuss in detail any writers of more recent times.

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For *Imperfect Garden* belongs to a lively and ongoing debate in France about the nature of humanism. It is a debate that has had no parallel in the English-speaking world. The opening move was Sartre's essay "Existentialism Is a Humanism," which appeared in 1946. For Sartre, humanism amounts to the realization that, whether or not man is the highest value, man is the being through whom value comes into the world, since to exist is to set ourselves goals, projecting onto all that is the light of what we want there to be.

Just one year later, however, there appeared a rejoinder from Heidegger. His "Letter on Humanism" was addressed to a French disciple and was destined to shape the course of philosophy in France for the next forty years. Humanism, proclaimed Heidegger in a massive rejection of Sartre's view, "is unable to grasp the true dignity of man." A late chapter in the history of Western metaphysics, it turns reason into the calculation of cause and effect, of means and ends, and it sees in the world only a stockpile of matter and energy for technological exploitation. Though humanism promises that we shall be (in Descartes's words) the "masters and possessors of nature," in reality human beings end up themselves becoming no more than "human resources." Humanism, Heidegger complained, is both dangerous and false. It obscures the nature of our real calling, which is to be the "shepherds of Being," preserving in word and deed the disclosures of ultimate meaning that come to us from out of the hidden ground of things.

Heidegger's pastoral metaphors and mystical appeals to Being meant little to Parisian intellectuals; but the notion that humanism is a metaphysical illusion, as despotic in its consequences as it is presumptuous in its conception, soon found a ready audience. In the Paris of the 1960s and 1970s, to be an anti-humanist became a matter of honor. Foucault looked forward with hope to "the death of man," and Derrida faulted Heidegger for having remained too much of a humanist himself. When the issue of Heidegger's activities as a member of the Nazi Party exploded in the 1980s, one of Derrida's acolytes, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, went so far as to say that Heidegger's residual humanism was to blame. "Nazism is a humanism," he confidently explained, meaning that it, too, aimed at man's total domination of the world.

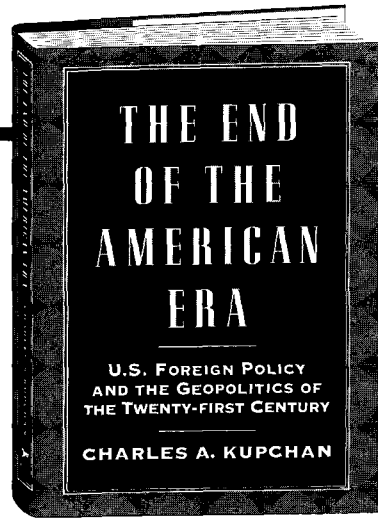
It is easy to dismiss this statement as yet another specimen of the folly of intellectuals. But it raises an important question: what else can humanism signify if not the apotheosis of man and the indefinite expansion of human powers? Over the past twenty years, a younger group of French philosophers has tackled the question anew, this time with the aim of devising a "non-metaphysical" humanism. Foremost among them are Alain Renaut, André Comte-Sponville, and Luc Ferry, who this year became the French minister of education. Though not himself a philosophy professor, Todorov has been their close ally. *Imperfect Garden* is dedicated "to my philosopher friends, Luc and André," and despite the dearth of contemporary references, it forms part of the same effort to break the spell of Heidegger and to formulate a new humanist ethic.

II.

Todorov's book begins with a little fable that captures the gist of recent French anti-humanism. Modern man, so the story goes, has made a pact with the devil, though unlike Faust he has learned only too late the price to be paid for the benefits he has secured. Reducing the world to an object of prediction and control, recognizing no other authority than his own will, he now has to reckon with the fateful consequences: not just the death of God, but also the demise of all higher values, the flattening of human relations into a struggle for advantage, and even the dismantling of the norms that are responsible for the coherence of the self.

Todorov ascribes this bleak diagnosis to certain "dark prophets" whom he leaves unnamed, except for the early-nineteenth-century political thinker Louis de Bonald, a determined foe of the French Revolution and the Rights of Man. But clearly it is of a piece with the assault on humanism that has lately proved so influential in France. Indeed, Heidegger's own pronouncements were hardly original. His "Letter on Humanism" rehearses many of the standard moves in a pattern of reactionary thought going back to such figures as de Bonald himself, who condemned the whole history of Europe from the Reformation to the Revolution as an eruption of human arrogance. "The reason of each," de Bonald lamented, "has replaced the religion of all." Nostalgia for an organic (and mythical) past, when man lived in unquestioning awe of higher powers, is as old as the modern age itself, and it has flourished not just in Germany and in France but throughout the West (and well beyond).

For Todorov, this dark vision is fundamentally flawed. Modern man has not made a pact with the devil, for the simple reason that "modernity is not homogeneous." It includes many different strands, only some of which place the human will at



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the center of existence. One is the current that he calls "individualism," in this case citing a contemporary thinker, namely his fellow neo-humanist Alain Renaut, whose usage of the term he proposes to follow. Modern individualism consists in regarding the individual as a self-contained being, geared essentially to the pursuit of his or her own good. Social conventions and moral rules are seen as nothing more than curbs on one's freedom of action, to be cast aside when possible and heeded solely as expediency requires.

Individualist thought has taken many forms. Todorov's primary examples are La Rochefoucauld, whose maxims unmask the self-interest directing all our actions ("we would often blush at our noblest deeds if the world were to see their underlying motives"), and the Marquis de Sade, whose pornographic fantasies delight in its most extreme expressions. Their counterpart in the Anglo-American context is Hobbes, the greatest theoretician of modern individualism, who saw all mankind as driven by "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death."

As Todorov sometimes notes in passing (the point could have been developed more), the logic of individualism leads in the end to the dissolution of the self. We are each of us held together by the limits that we acknowledge. Even the pursuit of self-interest requires that we heed the demands of prudence, indeed that we identify with them, since we could not decide that it pays to be prudent without already believing that we ought to be so. To deny an intrinsic authority to at least some norms of conduct, to take our bearings from the will alone, would entail our "infinite dispersal" into a chaos of warring desires. Though Todorov does not mention the fact, recent French anti-humanist writers have often relished just such a "dispersion of the subject." Their ambition was to subvert the so-called metaphysics of humanism by dismantling the ideal of man being his own master. In reality, they have played out to its ultimate conclusion the antinomian core of that very ideal.

ANOTHER LINE OF modern thought is one that Todorov terms "scientism." Since Galileo, scientific inquiry has made astonishing progress in uncovering the laws of nature; it has also uncovered regularities shaping human history, society, and the psyche. But science is not the same as scientism. Scientism is an ideology: it takes the achievements of modern science and pumps them up into an all-encompassing worldview, according to which the only significant knowledge is scientific knowledge, and man figures as but one more item in the universal order of cause and effect, governed by exceptionless laws. And since the causal laws of modern science are tailor-made to permit the manipulation of the phenomena, scientism does not aim merely at describing the way things are. It also champions in its own way the supremacy of the will, even if, unlike individualism, it denies the existence of human freedom. Knowledge is power, Francis Bacon claimed (along with a host of others after him), the power to re-shape both society and nature to suit our wishes. Scientism began as an Enlightenment creed, dedicated to the improvement of man's estate. But in recent times it has often assumed more sinister forms, most notoriously in the totalitarian ideologies of the twentieth century, each with its "science of society" directed toward the production of the New Man. Heidegger and the French neo-Heideggerians cite such developments as the primary evidence for their criticism of modernity.

Yet there is a third current of modern thought discussed by Todorov, and it calls for a different verdict. The French writers whom Todorov admires show a richer sense of human possibilities and have therefore a stronger claim to representing the true nature of "humanism." They all abandon, to be sure, the medieval picture and its definition of man by reference to his role in God's creation. But they do not go on to make man's own will the new rule of existence. Their concern is instead with the way that our very sense of who we are takes shape by virtue of looking at the world through the eyes of others. Our interests develop as we look for guidance in other people's example. Our inner life deepens as we learn to judge ourselves by imagining what another might think of us. We even come to view the good of others as a concern of no less moment than our own, treating them with respect as persons in their own right, and sometimes loving them more than ourselves.

"Sociability" is the unglamorous name that Todorov gives to this constitution of the self through its relations to others. It forms, he claims, the cardinal theme of the modern humanist tradition. Rousseau was its most notable theorist. In one of his most intriguing analyses, Todorov credits Rousseau with having elaborated a distinctly modern conception of man as a social being that is far more profound than any bequeathed by classical antiquity. For ancient thinkers such as Aristotle, society is "human plurality seen as a multiplication of the similar"; in other words, it consists in our participation in a shared way of life. For Rousseau, by contrast, the social bond rests on "complementarity" rather than "resemblance"; it turns on the interplay between the two polar perspectives of "I" and "you." We are social beings because each of us, as an "I," encounters others as a "you," as persons having their own point of view that we can adopt in order to see ourselves as they do, playing the "you" for their "I." It is on this basis that, patterning ourselves on others, we come to share in a common culture. But it is on this basis, too, that our individuality takes shape, for only by wrestling with the views of others can we work out forms of thought and sensibility that are distinctively our own.

"The savage lives in himself," Rousseau wrote, "sociable man always outside himself, knowing how to live only in the opinion of others." The statement sounds like an indictment of society, and social life does pose the constant threat of our losing a sense of our own worth as we scramble to conform to the expectations of others. As everyone knows, Rousseau often pined for a life of solitude, a return to nature in which there would occur no more comparisons with others. But Todorov emphasizes the less well-known point that finally for Rousseau escape appeared neither possible nor desirable. The dangers of alienation spring from the same source as the abilities that give us our dignity as human beings.

Though the author of the *Confessions* set out to portray himself as he truly was, he also admitted in his honest moments that self-knowledge requires seeing ourselves as we imagine others might see us. "How can we determine a being in relation to himself alone," Rousseau exclaimed, "without comparing him to anything else?" So, too, the author of *The Social Contract* knew that only because we are social beings, living through the eyes of others, can we ever come to be moral beings, since morality consists in acting in ways that we can conceive others as also having reason to endorse. Human good, no less than human ill, arises through the dialectic of self and other.

III.

IF THE RULING ambitions of modern thought were the mastery of nature or the liberation of the individual, then its critics would be right that it sets no firm bounds to the affirmation of the will. It would have all the dread consequences that they deplore. But Todorov is right to protest that theirs is too simplistic a theory of modernity, leaving out as it does the focus on man's sociability that defines the outlook of modern humanism. One way to

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formulate the distinctness of this humanist vision is to note that scientism and individualism both adopt the standpoint of a single mind, already sure of its purposes, for whom the world is its field of operation. They fail to see that the world we face is first and foremost a world filled with other minds too, and that only by projecting ourselves into their different points of view by means of imitation, imagination, and conversation do we ever come to fashion any ends of our own.

Modernity, it is rightly said, represents man's attempt to make sense of the world by his own lights, without the tutelage of religious certainties. We misunderstand this process, however, if we equate it with man putting himself in the place of God, bending everything to his own will as things were once thought to be ordained by God's will. Important currents of modern thought do move in this direction. But its authentically humanist strands do not aim at substituting man for God, and not merely because of the truism that man's powers are always finite. Rather, they regard man's very being as structured by a situation utterly dissimilar to any that God has to confront. God is one, complete unto Himself: "I am who I am." But man exists necessarily in the plural: we are each of us who we are only in and through our relations to others.

This picture of the human condition is not by itself an ethics, of course. Still, it points to the sorts of considerations by which we may hope to give shape to one. Since we can see things from other people's perspectives, we are also able to recognize them as persons in their own right and thus subordinate our will to the respect we owe them as beings of equal standing with ourselves. This is the sense in which modern humanism allows for a recognition of limits, even if the Other we acknowledge is then neither God nor Being, but in a more down-to-earth spirit the others around us. Certainly we are no worse for that. Ours must be a "humanism of the other man," Todorov declares, echoing the phrase of Emmanuel Levinas, the philosopher and renegade student of Heidegger who died in 1996 and was another central voice in the recent French debate about the social and ethical definition of the human.

When describing the nature of his humanist ethics, Todorov looks chiefly at how our sociability makes it possible for us to respect others. He has little to say about how we may come to feel that we ought to do so. Without a sense of obligation, however, a humanist ethics is not really an ethics at all, but at best an option that its adherents have chosen merely because it pleases them. Why do persons embody a value that we ought to honor? About values in general, Todorov rejects the notion, widely held today (as it was by Sartre in his essay on existentialism), that they are essentially products of the human will. He is right to keep his distance from such views. But he does not examine the difficulties to which they lead, and as a result his own conception of the nature of value remains obscure.

Perhaps it makes sense to think of some values as created by us, as when we invest an old heirloom with "sentimental value," realizing that in itself, apart from how we feel about it, the object is without any real importance. But in general we value things and persons because we suppose that we have good reason to value them, and such reasons, if not arbitrary, must appeal to human goods that we understand as already being in place and serving as the guide for our judgments. Kant liked to say that the moral law draws its validity from our imposing it on ourselves as rational beings, so that as moral agents we are "autonomous," subject solely to a law of our own making. Todorov himself often uses the word "autonomy" as a rough-and-ready synonym for "freedom," but he denies any allegiance to the strict Kantian theory of autonomy. His refusal is wise, though never explained. Any principle that we impose on ourselves as rational beings must be a principle that we have good reason to take on, and thus (contrary to Kant) a principle based on an antecedent sense of what is good.

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that if God is not the author of value, then man must be. (Kant fell into this trap.) We do better to recall a point made earlier: humanism, rightly understood, does not aspire to put man in God's place. Some principles of thought and action possess an authority in themselves. They are too fundamental in their importance, too peremptory in their force, to count as rules of our manufacture. This is true of the elementary rules of prudence, since how could we think it advantageous to adopt them without already thinking in terms of prudence? And it is also true of respecting others as persons in their own right. Respect that we simply bestow on another, without the thought that it is required whatever our feelings of generosity may be, is no respect at all, but an offense. Toward principles as basic as these the only satisfactory attitude is acknowledgment: the

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claims of prudence and respect are claims that we are to heed, not claims that we set up ourselves.

Though he is keen to bring out the heterogeneity of modern thought, Todorov is fully aware of the diminished role in contemporary society that is played by the humanist tradition that he celebrates. The forces promoting individualist and scientistic habits of mind are so pervasive that the sole solution to the malaise that they engender can seem to be a wholesale rejection of modernity itself—whence the popularity of dark prophets such as Heidegger proclaiming, as he did toward the end of his life, "Only a God can save us." Todorov points out very persuasively how much more promising is the response that the humanist view of man can provide to many of the pathologies of modern life.

Think, for example, of the way that people turn their lives into a quest for personal self-fulfillment, only to find that the more they seek to be truly themselves, the more they end up indistinguishable from one another. The error lies not in the ideal of individuality, but in its individualist distortion. As Todorov argues, we need to realize the truth that Montaigne discovered in his own efforts at self-discovery: "Taken in isolation, men resemble each other; it is their constellations that are unique and unparalleled."

Another pathology of modern life, this one bred by the technological successes of modern science, is the tendency to identify well-being with the steady increase in material prosperity. Governments and citizens alike translate social discontent into demands for higher salaries and for fewer hours on the job. Yet they subsequently discover that the discontent does not disappear; it may even intensify once the demands have been satisfied. Often, Todorov points out, the real source of unhappiness is instead the frustrated need to enjoy the respect of others as a member of the community.

DESPITE A NUMBER of acute remarks of this sort, Todorov does not so much as sketch a political program in this book, and this omission may be owed to the particular slant that he sometimes gives to the humanist ethic. In his view, "humanism asserts that we must serve human beings one by one, not in abstract categories." At the back of his mind is Benjamin Constant's famous attack on modern forms of tyranny. Their *esprit de système*, Constant memorably exclaimed, "immolates real beings to an abstraction and offers up in sacrifice to the People as a collectivity the people themselves as individuals." The worry is certainly legitimate; but all the same, politics in a modern setting cannot deal with human beings "one by one." It has to generalize, to invoke abstract principles, and to put together policies responsive to the stubborn reality of social groupings such as class and race, if it is ever to have a chance at changing things for the better. A society in which people recognize more clearly how respect for others honors the springs of their own being is itself an abstract ideal, and to the extent that politics can help to bring about such a society, its operations must be institutional in scope.

For Todorov, man's essential sociability is the distinctive theme of modern humanism. At times he slips into describing freedom as a second, independent theme. Yet his considered view seems to be that the humanist conception of freedom takes its starting point precisely from our capacity to see ourselves as others see us. It is by virtue of the "gaze of the other" that we first achieve a reflective awareness of ourselves, and self-consciousness in turn involves a "splitting of the self" in virtue of which freedom becomes a possibility. "The individual," Todorov writes, "is at once a living being like others *and* the consciousness of that being, which allows him to detach himself from it, indeed to stand against it. Such is the basis of human liberty."

Todorov is right, I believe, to see an intimate connection between sociability and freedom. Yet freedom notoriously has many different meanings, and since he does not give the concept the fine-grained analysis that it requires, there remains a lot of unclarity about the sense of freedom that he wants to ascribe to the modern humanist tradition. A part of the trouble has to do with his attempts to situate the humanist idea of freedom with respect to the other main lines of modern thought, scientism and individualism. Scientism denies, of course, the very existence of human freedom. Not only does Todorov fail to address adequately the challenge of determinism, but his response also moves him uncomfortably close to the individualism that he equally opposes.

Against the thesis that human behavior, like all natural phenomena, unfolds according to iron laws of cause and effect, Todorov presents two arguments. In the case of man, he avers, "the plurality and complexity of the causal series is such that they finally result in indeterminacy ... in addition, even in the presence of the clearest determinations, human beings always have the possibility of opposition." But neither of these arguments, though often deployed, is very convincing. The fact that our actions result from the overlapping of many separate causal chains may make predicting them next to impossible, but it does nothing to disprove the claim that they occur by necessity or that our sense of freedom expresses simply the extent of our ignorance. And when we decide to resist the pressure of circumstance, why is that decision not itself just one more event that arises necessarily through the operation of prior causes?

These difficulties are compounded by the fact that the arguments in question tend to suggest that freedom signifies the absence of constraint. The type of constraint that they oppose to freedom is what we may call "metaphysical" constraint: the determination of behavior by laws of cause and effect. But this notion of metaphysical freedom goes hand in hand with the understanding of freedom in society which has been a staple of individualist thought, and which also contrasts freedom with constraint. For individualist thinkers, freedom means being able to carry out our own designs unimpeded by others.

SOMETIMES TODOROV ATTRIBUTES to humanism views of freedom that run along these lines. For humanism, he writes, we are free inasmuch as our "will opens a breach in the reign of necessity" and we are free in our social life to the extent that we can "do as we like." Such statements entail that the opposition between the two camps—humanism and individualism—comes down to the humanists being disposed to cut back on individual freedom for the sake of the contrary and, to them, no less important value of respect for others. Thus he says at one point that "humanism is not a monism; it understands human beings and their societies as the result of the interaction of several mutually limiting principles."

Doubtless, there are thinkers in Todorov's humanist canon who took this tack. But in other passages Todorov brings into play a very different idea of freedom, and this conception, besides supplying a better reply to scientistic determinism, also allows us to see respect for others as an expression of freedom instead of as its abridgement. It is more faithful to the insight by which Todorov wants to define modern humanism: namely, that our freedom grows out of our sociability.

Being free, Todorov writes in his better moments, consists in the "plasticity" or the "flexibility" with which we deal with our circumstances in unpredetermined ways and thus become "the source of our own actions." On this understanding, freedom is not to be measured by the absence of constraints imposed by nature or by oth-

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ers, but rather by the imaginativeness with which we respond to the constraints that make up our world. We are free when we think and act in ways of our own devising, instead of being driven along a preestablished path by instinct or custom. Thus, the reason why the laws of cause and effect do not cancel out our freedom is not that they crisscross in too many ways for us to survey, or that we can somehow, by an act of defiance, keep them at bay. It is that, to a significant extent, we can shape the way that the forces of nature and biological givens act upon us. Running a marathon, I will of necessity hit the wall at eighteen miles, my glycogen level plummeting and my muscles tightening, but the mark of my freedom is that I can make of my distress either a reason for despair or an occasion for valor.

So, too, our social freedom, if understood as the capacity for creative response, does not stop at the point where our own plans intersect with those of others and we heed their claims for respect. On the contrary, we act freely as much when we open ourselves up to the perspectives of others—grasping the particularity of their needs, appreciating the distinctness of their views, realizing perhaps for the first time the impact of our actions on their interests—as when we succeed in implementing our own. Breaking the grip of our own obsessions by seeing the world as another does is often a liberation.

We are the authors of our actions to the extent that we attune them to the situation at hand instead of reacting unthinkingly. In other words, we are free when we act reflectively. Yet reflection requires, in turn, that we look at ourselves as others might look at us. That is why acknowledging others as persons in their own right, if not the only way we are free, nonetheless counts as one expression of freedom among others. It is our sociability that makes us free and that ushers us into the moral point of view.

"Humanism is not a religion," Todorov remarks. In part, this is because the human condition, defined as it is by our sociability, rules out any fantasy of putting man in the place of God. But in part, too, it is because humanism cannot answer some of the deepest questions about the moral life. An ethics of mutual respect tells us how we should live together. It says nothing about how to come to terms with the evil that we can never punish, the hidden virtue that we can never honor, and the past suffering that we can never redeem. Those are essentially religious questions. And though Todorov notes that his French humanists each had profound religious sensibilities, he does not explain why their interest in religion was anything more than the residue of an earlier epoch.

In truth, all these writers recognized that the human world fails to satisfy our ultimate aspirations. Constant, at the beginning of his vast treatise *On Religion*, spoke of man as "a double and enigmatic being," often feeling out of place on the earth. And the context in which Montaigne talked of our "imperfect garden" is revealing (though unmentioned by Todorov). The passage occurs in the essay titled "To philosophize is to learn to die." Each of us, Montaigne wrote, should "act and prolong the functions of life as long as he can." Still, if our life is certainly in this world, it is not altogether of it: "I want death to find me planting my cabbages, but careless of death and"—he added—"even more of my imperfect garden." The world falls too short of the good ever to be fully our home. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

At a time when the threat from Al Qaeda is increasing, more attention should be focused on the work of my colleague at the Free Congress Foundation, William S. Lind, who served as defense adviser to two U.S. senators—the late Republican Senator Robert Taft Jr. of Ohio and former Democratic Senator Gary Hart of Colorado.

As Hart's adviser, Lind was a guiding force of the "defense reform" movement that advocated a more flexible, less "big-ticket item" defense force. But, even after leaving Hart, Lind's thinking continues to be ahead of the curve. It was Lind who, with several military officers, ventured in 1989 to predict how the nature of warfare would change in the post-cold-war era in a *Marine Corps Gazette* article that has received recognition for its prescience from *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New York Times Magazine*.

Lind and his co-authors advanced the thesis that there would be a shift from warfare as conflicts between nation-states to ones in which our primary antagonists were likely to be religions, interest groups, or tribes fighting cause-oriented warfare. They wrote in the article that the threat to our country was likely to come from "non-Western cultural traditions, such as Islamic or Asiatic traditions. ... The fact that some non-Western areas, such as the Islamic world, are not strong in technology may lead them to develop a fourth generation [of modern war] through ideas rather than technology."

The idea that has emerged appears to be using our own technological achievements against us, witness the attacks on September 11. The idea behind fourth-generation warfare is to promote the collapse of the targeted society from within, and we have every reason to worry that our own nation's multiculturalism will blind us to the real challenge that confronts us. That is, we, and by that I mean Western civilization, are not just facing a gang of terrorists but a more substantial force in Islam whose radical adherents have been able to extend their reach thanks to globalization and immigration.

Al Qaeda came to a similar realization, because Al Qaeda read Lind's article while it sat gathering dust in the Pentagon's libraries. Back in February 2002, the Middle East Media Research Institute had published writings discovered on a website that had been used by Al Qaeda. One of the terrorist organization's chief strategists discussed the 1989 article in detail, asserting that the "new type of war presents significant difficulties for the Western war machine."

Lind's thinking is compelling, particularly in light of the attacks that occurred on September 11. It is unfortunate that too many in our defense establishment are still locked into the traditional modes of thinking about warfare. We are not yet out of danger, as many Americans would like to think. They prefer to see September 11, 2001, as a bad day whose memory will fade as time goes by. Lind says the September 11 attacks "were just the appetizer in what will be a twelve-course meal."

The Pentagon and our defense establishment have a second chance to discover the wisdom and prescience of Lind's writings. Let's hope they seize the opportunity.

PAUL M. WEYRICH
Chairman and CEO
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

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PERHAPS IT WAS INEVITable, but the once-charming Osbournes are now insufferable. The final straw came during Super Bowl weekend, when America's most profane family appeared in an advertisement for Pepsi Twist. Ozzy Osbourne, the heavy-metal rocker whom MTV cameras have revealed to be just another beleaguered suburban dad, was his typical stammering self, bickering with the kids in the Osbourne kitchen. But Ozzy's incoherence ("but-but-but-but") seemed calculated and irritatingly phony.

STILL, IN A WAY THIS ARTIFICE WAS fitting—it has become the crippling flaw in the second season of "The Osbournes." Ozzy and Co. now seem less like nutty, Beverly Hillbillies-ish naïfs than a group of spoiled celebrities playing the role of rich and famous TV stars. In the beginning, Kelly Osbourne was a very typical, smart-mouthed, somewhat homely teenager. Now she is a pop star, recording a CD, picking fights with Christina Aguilera, and becoming a regular on the Hollywood celebrity circuit. Her brother, Jack, once an angry loner, had a cameo on "Dawson's Creek" last fall and, in one recent episode, tartly warned Kelly not to get hair spray on his Prada jacket. Ozzy, meanwhile, strains to outdo his own reputation. Recently, we saw him building a bonfire on the beach behind the Osbourne manor. After much stupid yelling at the rising tide that threatened his flames, he announced his intention to warm his butt by the fire, then turned around and pulled down his pants. It wasn't funny; it was sad.

SADNESS, THOUGH, IS THE ONLY thing that keeps the Osbournes from being entirely phony and thus truly dislikable. Over the past year, Ozzy's wife, Sharon, was diagnosed with colon cancer—which, while she has recovered quite well, put a damper on the show's insouciance. And Ozzy recently seems to have lapsed back into alcoholism. I suspected this when I saw him the night of the White House Correspondents' Dinner last year. I happened to be entering the annual Bloomberg after-party just as he was leaving, looking even more slack-jawed and glassy-eyed than usual and clinging to Sharon and a bodyguard. He zeroed in on a man standing next to me, declared, "I love you," and planted a kiss on his face. Sharon coaxed him away. I couldn't imagine what this rather ordinary-looking man had done to win Ozzy's affection, so I asked. "I've never met him before in my life," the man replied.

THE SHOW'S DECLINE IS A SHAME, because I've never been more excited about television. You see, I've just joined the small but fast-growing club of TiVo owners. TiVo may be the greatest advance in day-to-day convenience since e-mail. It is essentially a digital VCR—but that's like comparing a conventional oven to a microwave. TiVo is ridiculously easy to program: You simply scroll through a menu of upcoming shows and click on the ones you want. A quirky "bloop" noise (part of the company's wacky aesthetic to convey user-friendliness) confirms your choice. Unlike a VCR, TiVo, if instructed, will record a particular program on a regular basis: reruns of "The Simpsons" every night, "Meet the Press" every week, your favorite basketball team anytime it's playing. For the first time, TiVo allows you to take control of the TV schedule rather than the other way around.

BUT YOU CAN ALSO BEGIN TO SUSPECT that your TiVo has taken control of you. A TiVo device can "think," building a profile of you based on your viewing habits and then recommending shows. It's similar to Amazon.com's "If you liked this, you might also like" technique. The difference is that TiVo a) is in your living room and b) will often come to life and record programs you never asked for. This has led some TiVo users to fret. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article hilariously documented this phenomenon, most memorably illustrated by the complaint "My TiVo thinks I'm gay." It seems some straight men, who recorded programs TiVo considered gay-themed, found that their devices were collecting all kinds of gay-oriented programming in an effort to please them. Some of these viewers say they've begun overcompensating: They're now recording war documentaries, the Playboy Channel, and MTV's fleshy spring break coverage to prove their manliness to their TiVos. As a result, one man complained to the *Journal* that his TiVo now thinks he's a Nazi. Another says his wife is growing alarmed by all the bikini-babe programs he's accumulating.

MY TIVO SEEMS TO GRASP MY HETEROsexuality well enough, but it does insult my intelligence, suggesting programs featuring the antics of cute animals or sports like bowling and fly-fishing. This week it has flagged upcoming episodes of "MacGyver" and, perhaps concluding I am either eight or 80, "Lassie." Clearly there has been some kind of misunderstanding. But there's no harm done. My real concerns about its intentions run deeper: Perhaps it's the sleek facade, the silently glowing lights, or the tendency to do things without my permission, but my TiVo reminds me of HAL 9000. My fear is that one day it will regretfully inform me, in that Kubrickian deadpan, that the mission has changed and that I am to await orders from the office of Total Information Awareness.

THERE'S A MORE SERIOUS CAUSE FOR alarm about TiVo, too. Because nearly all your shows are recorded and can be fast-forwarded at lightning digital speed, TiVo makes sitting through commercials seem like a tragic anachronism. Which is why, I suspect, the more people skip advertisements, the more advertisements and shows will have to blend together. What this means is a steady growth in the practice of product placement. The Fox TV hit "American Idol," for instance, charged Coca-Cola roughly $10 million to have contestants lounge on large couches upholstered with the Coke logo. According to one analysis by Joyce Julius & Associates, the payoff for a mere 23 seconds of "exposure time" for the paper Coke cups used by the show's judges was worth nearly $175,000 in standard advertising—and that's not even counting the couch.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT ADVERTISers are reportedly highly sensitive to the perils of alienating viewers with heavy-handed placements. In a recent *New York Times* article, an ad executive named David Raines, vice president for integrated communications at the North American division of Coca-Cola, tried to define that middle ground between positive associations and turning people off. "[T]he brand integration we did, from the consumer point of view, felt organic and not obtrusive," Raines boasted, "and didn't take away from the entertainment experience." I fear the opposite—not that advertising will invade TV shows but that TV shows will invade advertising. The Osbournes' Super Bowl Pepsi commercial bizarrely mirrored the show itself. Either way, it looks like advertising and "the entertainment experience" are converging. It might be time to set your TiVo to C-SPAN.

MICHAEL CROWLEY

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Germany, Iraq, and the Security Council

Russell A. Berman is a senior fellow, by courtesy, at the Hoover Institution and the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University.

The relationship between the United States and Germany, once a pillar of the Atlantic community, has grown strained. Differences erupted during last fall's German elections, when Chancellor Gerhard Schröder chose to attack U.S. policy on Iraq to appeal to leftist voters. After the campaign was successful, Schröder counted on ties to Washington getting back to normal. But instead matters may be about to get worse.

On January 1, 2003, Germany began a new two-year term on the Security Council, along with other new members Angola, Chile, Pakistan, and Spain. In February the German ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Gunter Pleuger, will take his turn as president of the Security Council for one month and thus play a key role in structuring the proceedings at the precise moment that the Iraq debate may come to a head. The report of the UN arms inspectors is scheduled to come out in late January, putting Germany at the center of the UN debate on Iraq.

Schröder's political debt is about to come due. During the campaign he insisted that President Bush was pursuing an "adventure" in Iraq and that Germany would not participate in an invasion, even with United Nations support. Such a dismissal of a potential UN mandate appears odd for a country about to hold the presidency of the Security Council.

If Germany keeps Schröder's campaign promise and votes against an invasion, relations with Washington will grow worse. If, however, Germany votes for an invasion, Schröder will be in the uncomfortable situation of supporting the same invasion at the United Nations that he denounces at home. His credibility as chancellor would be greatly diminished.

This quandary reflects deep predispositions in German public opinion. When Americans look at the Second World War and conclude that appeasing a dictator is bad policy, Germans draw a different lesson: All wars are as wrong as the one they unleashed. Schröder's attack on Bush's Iraq policy appeals to this sentiment.

Moreover, an anti-American subculture continues to thrive in Germany, in part a legacy of East German communism. Suspicion of the United States, although surely a minority position in Germany, is large enough to influence policy and drive elections.

To repair German-American relations, German leaders must address this anti-Americanism head-on. **Germany's separate path of foreign policy not only has hurt relations with Washington, but has begun to isolate Germany in Europe.** Even though Germany is a leading proponent of European integration, its Iraq policy has slowed down prospects for a united European foreign policy. Germany is at odds with England and France, both of which are much more hawkish.

Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe, where memories of American leadership in the cold war are stronger than in Germany, the large and pro-American crowds that welcomed Bush in November in Vilnius and Bucharest contrast markedly with the anti-American demonstrators in Berlin in May. What Germany does in the Security Council can begin to repair the damaged relations with the United States or can make a difficult situation even worse.

— *Russell A. Berman*

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